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Worship in the Perspective of World Lutheranism

Eugene L. Brand

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Generic Editorial

Please note the plain black type on white paper. Nothing artistic about that title or clever or symbolic. Just as the generic peanut butter, spaghetti, or beer has to sell itself (without the usual Skippy, Chef Boyardi, or Budweiser brand names), so the diverse contents crammed into these sixty-four pages have to stand on their own this time. All we promise is your money's worth — and wholesome nutrition.

Eugene L. Brand offers up the first course on — what else? — worship today. As a confessional movement, we Lutherans have no special liturgy, but we remain within the liturgical tradition of the one church. The author speaks not of a brand-named Lutheran liturgy, but about the liturgy of the church as Lutherans have used it. Eucharistic prayers, he recalls, are part of the catholic tradition; hence, eucharistic prayers that are sound evangelically cannot possibly be un-Lutheran. Our American worship forms a model for Christians in Asia, Africa, and Latin America because we have had to blend classic Lutheran culture with more indigenous cultural forms. Convergence in worship may be the new wave in ecumenical dialogue. Christians will increasingly find it incomprehensible that all should not gather together to celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb. Once we worship together, theological and doctrinal discussions will march to a different beat.

Next, **Richard Jungkuntz** takes a look at our calling in the world and in the public ministry. Our first ordination is our baptism into the people of God. All other holy orders derive from this. His thesis style permits a herky-jerky reading, with frequent pauses to check the structure of the argument and one's agreement with it. The content of the call, of a plumber or a preacher, is the offer of forgiveness. That offer authorizes the public proclaimer to forgive sins. Theses call for antitheses or, at least, responses. Our respondents are: **Leonard Klein**, **Richard Koenig**, and **Martin L. Kretzmann**.

Many women today feel called to serve almost in defiance of their churches. **Lyn Mehl** studies the call of Jeremiah and finds its modern echo in the prophetic voices alive in the Christian feminist spirit. They have no haven from the words of justice that lie burning inside them; they wonder what will happen to the excellent spirit of dialogue between Lutherans and Roman Catholics when the place of women in the church is addressed. Perhaps women will need to exercise their vital force in the church as wounded healers.

El Salvador, they say, will be no Vietnam. Why, then, do they say it so often? "Blessed are the peacemakers," Jesus said; "They will be called the children of God." **Dennis Jacobsen** tells a parable about birds — eagles, hawks, owls, mockingbirds, sparrows and doves. It is a beautiful and chilling story, a morality play in fowl language. Feel free to duplicate it for a church meeting and discuss its implications for your calling as church. **John F. Backe** offers a more conventional essay on peace-making. He claims that pastors cannot be faithful to their calling without addressing — and opposing — the arms race. He offers suggestions to peacemakers in the areas of worship, preaching, counseling, education, and stewardship.

Meanwhile, **David Pearcy** completes his series of three articles on infant communion. He believes that if one can receive baptism as an infant, one can also receive the Lord's Supper. Delaying eucharistic participation, in his view, suggests that criteria other than baptism provide access to the altar. Baptism gives and the eucharist maintains life — for all God's people. His may be a minority position within American Lutheranism, but his appeals to history, theology, and theories of child development may help all of us clarify our own understanding of baptism and what is meant by "worthiness" to receive the supper. Remember: Generic editorials express no opinions.

For all the talk about revelation in the church, little attention has

been given to dreams. **Robert Gnuse** rectifies this and shows how two types of dreams were prominent in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East: dreams with an auditory message and dreams with symbolic visual imagery. Dreams were frequent in patriarchal times and in late apocalyptic, but this mode of revelation fell out of favor among the classical prophets and the authors of the wisdom literature. Comparative studies help us to understand better the dreams of Samuel and Solomon.

Are our prisons places where anyone can be reformed, or where no one can? **Gary Blobaum** reviews the philosophies behind the American prison system and shows how we often feel justified when criminals stay criminals. The small actions of those associated with Jesus could have great repercussions on something like the prison system, but only because all those who do them are on the road to the cross. Human honesty, in small matters and large, may do much to defuse the system.

Before you pass over to the book reviews, you should pause to read the two poems by **Lyn Mehl** and **Ruth Bretscher Ressmeyer**.

A generic issue might come in a plain brown wrapper; our cover, happily, is awash in green, the color of life and growth. The Father's strategy in seeking a lively world is to send forth his all too human daughters and sons as his last great hope. Generically speaking, we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. It's all so majestically plain.

Simply,
The Editor

Worship in the Perspective of World Lutheranism

Eugene L. Brand

Lutheran World Ministries, New York, NY

Essay delivered at a convocation at Christ Seminary – Seminex, on the occasion of the conveying of an honorary doctorate, February 2, 1981. The faculty's citation is on page 133.

The best-kept secret in the areas of church cooperation and ecumenical progress has been the role of the liturgy. If one takes Vatican II as a convenient benchmark and looks at the liturgical materials produced in mainline churches of the West since its close, one cannot help noticing that their similarities are more notable than their differences. And if one talks to teachers of liturgy and those occupying the liturgical offices of the church bodies, one finds a predominantly positive attitude toward intercommunion and the reunion of western Christians.

Let me report a few items which may have escaped your notice. 1) In January, 1980, George Lindbeck told an audience at the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia that, in his opinion, the advances made liturgically between Lutherans and Roman Catholics are more significant ecumenically than the results of theological dialogue.[1] A few months later, reporting to the LWF Executive Committee meeting in Augsburg, he elaborated the point this way:

> Our conversations with Rome can help us to recover some of the riches of the Catholic heritage which the Reformers wished to retain, and which we have tended to lose. The losses have been inevitable amidst the polemical divisions and reciprocal narrowing of the last centuries. Good evangelical and catholic emphases and customs have over and over again been branded as "papist" and therefore abandoned by the Lutherans or as "Protestant," and therefore abandoned by the Catholics. Now the conversations with Rome more than any of the dialogues in which we are engaged challenge Lutherans to renew their original self-understanding as a reform movement within the historically continuous church rather than as a separate ecclesiastical establishment outside of it.[2]

2) At this year's meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy, Professor James White reported on his project to analyze liturgical training in U.S. seminaries. In his introductory remarks he said, "If I can teach liturgics, why would I want to teach ecumenics?"

3) The recent issue of *Grapevine*, published by JSAC (Joint Strategy and Action Committee) reports the findings of its Delphi effort. That involved analysis of the perceptions of church leaders in the area of mission in North America of the "most significant trends with which local and national church bodies will have to deal in the years ahead." One of the oracular findings was this:



> There will be greater acceptance of and participation in ecumenical efforts, coupled with greater difficulties for denominations to find funds for them. *Growing use of common liturgies and texts will result in greater grass-roots ecumenism.* Protestant denominations, as well as Roman Catholics, will increasingly engage in joint actions at local and national levels, ignoring deep theological differences while doing so.[3]

This JSAC prediction parallels an increasing emphasis on "local ecumenism" in such places as the (Roman Catholic) Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Washington, and the (Lutheran) Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg.

In various ways these items indicate that the secret is being discovered. People are recognizing how much ecumenical progress has been made in liturgical work over the past decades, and the im-

[1] "Liturgical renewal above all . . . gives hope for the future. . . . Separation at the Lord's Table is increasingly experienced as an arbitrary and artificial act." LC/USA News Release 80-5 (25 January 1980), 4.

[2] Minutes, LWF Executive Committee, 6-12 July 1980, Exhibit 10.1.7, para. 13.

[3] Volume 12, No. 5 (November 1980), 4. Italics added.

The Degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*
is awarded to
EUGENE L. BRAND

Project Director of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship and chief producer of the 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, the literate and vocal advocate of genuinely shared parish worship and provider of many materials in its support.

Now the director of the Office of Studies of Lutheran World Ministries, Eugene Brand is best known for his central guidance in the production of the new *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

His labors in this direction began as Coordinator of Worship in the Lutheran Church of America. During his years as professor of theology and worship in the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Columbus, Ohio, he became a member of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. Here he became a well-known advocate of excellence and participation in the worship of all the participating synods. He served both with the International and American Consultation on English Texts and was an observer for the Lutheran World Federation at the Concilium on the Sacred Liturgy at the Vatican. He has served in the editing of *Worship* and on the board of *Church Music*.

pact of the common results of that work is beginning to register. If the future mode of the ecumenical movement is local ecumenism, then the worshipping congregation will be the focus of that local action.

We Lutherans can learn from our own history how producing common liturgical materials has been a factor in Lutheran unity. The *Common Service Book* was presented to the merger convention of the United Lutheran Church in America (1918) by a commission representing the three merging bodies. The eight churches which produced the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958) had merged into two bodies within four years of its publication.[4] Could it be that the main factor in the refusal of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod to adopt the *Lutheran Book of Worship* was an instinct that it would add impetus for increased fellowship among the churches and, perhaps, even for merger?

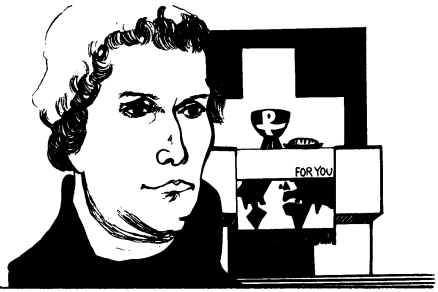
My topic is "Worship in the Perspective of World Lutheranism." Before addressing it, however, I would like to set it in the context of the Church Catholic.

Catholicity of Lutheran Worship

The liturgies of Baptism and the Eucharist are part of the common heritage of Christianity. Together with the Holy Scriptures and the Ecumenical Creeds, they constitute that fundamental tradition which binds the churches together and shapes their life. In fact, the liturgies pre-date the New Testament and the creeds, and helped to shape both. Even Protestant scholars are beginning to recognize the liturgical tradition as source material for understanding the faith of the Church.

As George Lindbeck observed, Lutherans are rediscovering their original self-understanding as a reform movement within the Western Church. Unlike the reformation traditions rooted in Zurich, Canterbury, and Geneva, the Lutherans had little interest in ecclesial structures. Our forebears were not interested in creating a new or even a separated church, nor were they trying to recreate the primitive church. They were truly *reformers* and, in going about that task, they affirmed the ecclesial tradition as they inherited it: ordered clergy, the mass, infant baptism, even the papacy — provided, of course, that these were understood in terms of the Gospel. The sectarian spirit of the *Schwärmer* upset them even more than the misuse of ecclesial authority by bishops and the pope.

Calling Lutheranism a reforming or confessional movement should not be understood in such a way that it devalues our heritage. There can be no doubt that God's *ekklesia* has been in evidence among us, and that it continues to be. But we Lutherans are in the unique position that, if we remain true to our confessional heritage, we can enter into negotiations with other communities of faith unencumbered by any need to defend a particular ecclesial system. In fact



our most notorious weaknesses are in the area of church structure. We have never been able to agree on a concept of the ordained ministry, and the church structures that we have erected — at least in this country — tend to swing dizzily from a rampant congregationalism to an arbitrary exercise of central authority that can make pope and curia look pale by comparison. Ecumenical pressure would push world Lutheranism in the direction of greater "ecclesial density" so that we can negotiate with Rome, Canterbury, and Constantinople as "sister churches." We should resist that pressure lest we lose the uniqueness of our position as a confessional movement which has existed outside the historic structures in a kind of emergency situation. As an American statement prepared for the LWF has it:

> "Lutherans can be open to all ecclesial possibilities, while insisting only "*Est autem ecclesia congregatio sanctorum, in qua evangelium pure docetur et recte administrantur sacramenta*" (CA 7). Lutheran fellowship is, thus, theologically not ecclesially determined, and Lutheran ecumenical posture and strategy are similarly determined."[5]

I have made a point of our being a confessional movement because I am convinced it has implications for our life of worship as Lutherans. Among other things, understanding ourselves as a confessional movement *within* the historically continuous Church implies that we remain *within* the liturgical tradition of the Church. We must be clear that to take a stand which is affirmative ecumenically has tremendous liturgical implications. It requires a positive evaluation of the liturgical consensus which has grown so dramatically over the past decade and a half. If the goal of the ecumenical movement is a Church which is at the same time thoroughly catholic and thoroughly evangelical, then perhaps we Lutherans are in the most favored position to exemplify such an evangelical catholicism. If so, where will it become clearest and most obvious if not in our liturgical assemblies?

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the "*Lutheran* liturgy"; there can only be the "liturgy of the church" as Lutherans have been wont to use it. The impact of the Enlightenment did cause Lutherans to stray from the catholic liturgical heritage of the Reformation. And in some sectors of Lutheranism in this country that heritage was diluted by the compulsion to emulate Anglo-American forms of Protestantism. But our liturgical work since the middle of the 19th century has been occupied with recovering the liturgical forms our confessional heritage affirms. For people like Luther Reed it may have been necessary to do

[4] The ALC, 1960; the LCA, 1962.

[5] Minutes, Lutheran World Ministries Commission, 1-2 May 1980, Exhibit A, para. 9.

this under the banner of restoring the Lutheran liturgy. What was really happening, of course, was the gradual restoration of the Western Mass.

We cannot deny some peculiarities in the Lutheran use of the common tradition. The most obvious of these has been perpetuation of Luther's almost total "canonectomy." Because he had theological problems with the Roman *canon missae*, and because he was influenced by the reductionism typical of late medieval theology, Luther's solution in the *Formula Missae* was to remove all of the canon but the Preface, *Qui pridie* (who the day before he suffered. . . .), *Verba testamenti* (words of institution), and *Sanctus*. In so doing, he removed from the Mass what had been its textual heart. He could have replaced the Roman canon with a more evangelical thanksgiving — as Cranmer did — since his objection was not to eucharistic prayers *per se*. But Luther's reductionistic solution became normative for Lutheran practice and, so far as I know, was ignored only a few times in the period from 1523 to the mid-20th century.

In 1942 the Church of Sweden adopted a liturgy with a brief prayer preceding the *Verba*. In 1955 the German Lutherans published *Agenda I*, which contained a full eucharistic prayer as an alternative to the *Verba* alone. In 1958 the *Service Book and Hymnal* made the *Verba* alone the alternative to a eucharistic prayer. The *SBH* precedent was incorporated into *Culto Cristiano* published in 1964 with the cooperation of the Missouri Synod. And in 1978, the *Lutheran Book of Worship* offered its users the choice of four eucharistic prayers while still allowing for the *Verba* alone or the Swedish practice from the 1940s.

Not unexpectedly, the reintroduction of eucharistic prayers brought cries of "un-Lutheran." A rather arbitrary solution of Luther's, now with four centuries of emulation, was being elevated to doctrinal or confessional status. An idiosyncratic usage was being viewed as part of the core of Lutheran identity. That is clearly a sectarian stance which militates against our confessional tradition as a reforming movement. Since eucharistic prayers belong to the fabric of the Christian liturgical tradition (indeed go back to its Jewish matrix!), the only objection a confessional movement could possibly have to them would be theological. If a eucharistic prayer is sound evangelically, it could not possibly be un-Lutheran!

I have risked belaboring this point because it illustrates so well the liturgical stance appropriate to Lutherans who understand themselves as a confessing movement within the Church Catholic. We cannot claim to be evangelical catholics and jettison a central part of the catholic liturgical tradition. Rather we must reform it so that it becomes evangelically sound.



Recent Advances

For those of us who have been directly involved in liturgical work and who have visions of what we would like to see accomplished, liturgical progress among Lutherans in this country can seem agonizingly slow. And even where progress is made, we are aware how fragile its foundations often are. But an objective comparison will indicate how far we've come in the past few decades. If it were possible to recreate the average Lutheran service on the eve of World War II, we would find that most of today's Lutherans would have difficulty identifying with it. Or if we wish to compare ourselves with Lutherans in Germany or Scandinavia, we would again see our progress in a clearer light.

Let me list what the chief accomplishments have been:

1. Increased frequency of celebration of the Eucharist; more frequent communion.
2. Better grasp of the reciprocal relationship between sermon and sacrament.
3. A more liturgically determined church music practice coupled with higher standards.
4. Vastly improved standards in our hymnals.
5. More lay participation in roles of liturgical leadership, and a more inclusive style of language.
6. Improved and more appropriate architectural settings.
7. Great progress in the recovery of historic vestments.
8. Better understanding of the function of ritual action.
9. Increasing openness to ecumenical development; decreased paranoia about "being catholic."
10. Growing understanding of Baptism and its ecclesial significance.
11. Greater evidence of a corporate spirit and of joy and thanksgiving.
12. Better integration of "the arts."

Humanly speaking, this progress has been achieved through the dedicated labors of countless folks with great talent who have received comparatively little recognition for their efforts.

The *Lutheran Book of Worship* is, of course, the recent embodiment of our liturgical and musical progress. If the churches can regard it as a beginning rather than a conclusion, it can be instrumental in broadening and deepening the worship life of our people. It stands as the first truly inter-Lutheran book, bringing together the best of our various ethnic traditions. And it stands as an example of catholic worship which is truly evangelical in substance.

Liturgical Leadership

What has been accomplished here in North America should also be seen in the context of world Lutheranism. Our churches are being looked to for leadership by Lutherans in all parts of the world.

It becomes increasingly clear that our

North American churches have a bridge function to play in modern world Lutheranism between the parent churches of Europe and the so-called younger churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America. On the most primitive level that has to do with language. A larger number of member churches of the LWF are now more comfortable with English than with German. The addition over the past decade of dozens of new members from Asia, Africa and Latin America has altered the complexion of the LWF drastically. I was struck by how this was symbolized in Augsburg last summer at the 450th Jubilee: the scores of white Lutheran bishops (all in black) were salted with a number of Lutheran bishops of other races (many in white)!

But our bridge function goes deeper than language. We continue to share, of course, a vast common tradition of liturgical and musical stuff with Germany, Scandinavia, and the Central Europeans. And we continue to depend (perhaps not so much as before) on their scholarship. With the possible exception of Australia, our forms of worship probably resemble those in modern Europe more than do those of Lutheran churches in other parts of the world. Together with our European cousins we face many common cultural and social problems.

The chief difference between our churches and those of our European parents, however, is structural. The Scandinavian churches are still state churches whose clergy are civil servants. The West German churches, while not state churches, are folk churches with complex bureaucratic structures and ties to the state. The German clergy are not civil servants, but they are supported by a special church tax collected for the churches by the state. These structures are not without their value and they do have strengths. But perhaps their most serious defect is that the church tends to be viewed by the populace as a service agency which is there when needed. One finds little sense of congregational responsibility for their own corporate life and existence; indeed, one detects little sense of corporateness on the congregational level at all. Thus vital worship which is so integrally related to vital community is difficult.

Even more difficult is the effective revision of liturgy. Without a close-knit congregational structure it is virtually impossible to mount effective educational programs. People who attend church only occasionally tend to resist liturgical change most vehemently. When they *do* attend, they want it to be like they remember it. The Church of England has experienced similar difficulties. The result of all this is little progress on the parish level. In Germany, pastors are still in black and services still tend to be heavily penitential and/or intellectualistic.

During the Augsburg festivities there was an afternoon forum on liturgy sponsored by what used to be called the High Church Movement. Representatives of



similar groups from Denmark, Norway and Sweden were there, and I had been asked to join them to report on the liturgical scene in North America. I was immediately struck by the prevailing spirit — that of the persecuted remnant — a spirit which has all but disappeared in our churches. But I was even more struck by the reaction to my report. "You must understand that such progress is just not possible in our church structures. The people are too conservative and the church law is too restrictive." In some places there are remarkable signs of progress, but they are all para-congregational: they don't touch the chief Sunday service.

This state of affairs drives a wedge between us and our European parents when one gets beyond theory into practical strategies. If the West German/Scandinavian scene is hard for us to understand and deal with, it is even more perplexing for churches in Asia and Africa. Their structures are more like ours even though their practical problems may be different. That makes it more natural for them to use us as model instead of the Europeans. But in recent decades one even has to distinguish between western and eastern Europe. Lutherans in the German Democratic Republic have had their folk-church trappings stripped away. And while the older people and the older pastors still yearn for them, a new generation regards the separation from the state as healthy and even promising. It is easier to talk to these Lutherans about problems and solutions than with western Europeans because their church structures are more like ours. If channels of communication with the east bloc become increasingly open, we may find ourselves being a bridge even to them.

Evangelical Catholicism

Let me, now, return to the ecumenical context and to the concept of evangelical catholicism. Is it our vocation as Lutherans to demonstrate both to Protestants and Roman Catholics how an evangelical catholicism looks? The Anglican Communion, as George Lindbeck has pointed out, may perform the bridging function between the Eastern and Western churches, but we Lutherans are the bridge between Rome and the Protestants.[6]

Both theologically and liturgically, American Lutherans may be the chief architects of that bridge. Relationships with the Roman Church in Asia and Africa are hindered by the continuation of pre-Vatican II policies. Bishop Kibera (President LWF) has noted that in his part of Africa the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity cannot be observed and Catholics are still rebaptizing other Christians. Obviously, much remedial work is needed there. In Europe, relationships with the Roman Church are

[6] Lindbeck, George, "The Crucial Role of the American Church," *Lutheran Forum* 14:1 (1980), 8-9.

weighed down by centuries of bloody history which is still palpably present in cities and buildings and monuments. American Lutheran relationships with Rome are much more free of the encumbrances of both these extremes. On the one hand, we should take advantage of the situation and do here as much as we can. On the other hand, we must not kid ourselves that conditions here are typical of conditions elsewhere. Otherwise we shall lose our credibility in other parts of the Lutheran world, most of which tend to think we've gone too far or too fast, or both.

Fordham theologian Kevin Irwin has recently published a review and critique of the Lutheran/Catholic Dialogue in the United States in which he urges the participants to adopt a methodology which takes the celebration of the liturgy more seriously. He sees that as a way to bridge another gap.

> The application of the method proposed here requires that any such ecumenically-oriented theology move from historical research to contemporary involvement in the process of interpreting a church's theology as based in history, but as experienced in the present liturgical celebrations of the churches. In such a proposal, "orthodoxy" retains its primitive meaning as involving prayer and the right praise of God as foundational for any adequate theology . . . The more the liturgy is revived as a *locus theologicus* for the general sacramental theology, the more will ecumenical theology based on this method prove acceptable to a wider public.[7]

The point of all this is that work we do in North America in liturgy cannot be done or evaluated tribally. It has a world-Lutheran and an ecumenical diminsion. It deals directly with people's experience of the means of grace and with how these shape our ecumenical vision and our sense of mission. Thus liturgical matters are always ultra-sensitive issues and subject to political currents. But we dare not let these realities sidetrack us nor cloud over the reality of Christian community which our Eucharists celebrate and — haltingly — demonstrate.

The impact of liturgical convergence upon inter-Lutheran and ecumenical rapprochement is being seen and felt. As that experience intensifies and becomes more accessible, it will be increasingly difficult to keep the household of faith in its separated wings. Increasingly Christians will find it incomprehensible that all should not gather together in the great hall, there to celebrate the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. Thereafter they may find it easier to work out their doctrinal differences. "For the Lamb who was slain *has* begun his reign. Alleluia!"

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[7] Irwin, Kevin, *American Lutherans and Roman Catholics in Dialogue on the Eucharist: A Methodological Critique and Proposal.* Studia Anselmiana 76, Sacramentum 5 (Rome, 1979), 167-68.

Theses Toward a Lutheran Theology of the Call

Richard Jungkuntz

Provost, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA

I. In Principle

1. A Lutheran theology of the "call" — like all authentic Lutheran theology — is nothing more nor less than explication and application of the Gospel.

2. In Lutheran understanding, the Gospel is truly Gospel only if it is *unconditional* — "without any merit or worthiness in me"; "not by my own reason or strength"; "it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

3. The Gospel is genuinely Gospel when it is received and shared as the forgiveness of sin.

4. All articles of faith are rightly understood only when they are grasped as corollaries to the Gospel of forgiveness of sin.

5. More accurately stated, all articles of *faith* ("doctrines") are windows that enable us to look in — from various points of view — upon the one, sole jewel of faith, the one supreme article, the only ultimate "saving" doctrine, namely, the forgiveness of sin (or, in St. Paul's terms, the justification of the ungodly for Christ's sake through faith).

7. In other words, the God of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the God who does what he does by *calling* — he calls those things which are not as though they were; he calls light out of darkness; he calls us who were not his people to be his sons and daughters, and thus the bearers of his call.

8. As the forgiveness of sins began in ministry, the ministering life and death of Jesus as the Christ, so it continues in ever widening circles of ministry, the ministering lives and deaths of all whom God has called and will call by the one Gospel of forgiveness in his Son.

9. My call, therefore, is the form my life takes according as God organizes and shapes it for me through the grace of forgiveness (Einar Billing).

10. Thus I find my true Christian "calling" in whatever station of life the divine call of God's forgiveness reaches me, whether as mother, son, sister, pupil, teacher, neighbor, postal worker, shoemaker, legislator, flight attendant, parish pastor, worker-priest, or whatever.

11. This means there are *not* two kinds of "callings" — a "divine" call for the clergy and an ordinary "Christian" calling for lay folk. On the contrary, there is only *one* divine call for all us sinners. That is the call to be and to live as *forgiven* sinners — to work and to play, to speak and to care, as sinners who have heard the voice that freely and fully forgives for Jesus' sake.

12. To repeat: it is the divine call of forgiveness that transforms one's ordinary station in life into a Christian calling (*vocatio*). But just as God's call of forgiveness is never "immediate," but always "mediated" through the means of grace (Luther: *per media*), so also the "vocation" in which Christians hear the call of forgiveness is always one to which they have been called through appropriate means. E.g., the mayor is elected by the citizenry; the husband becomes a

father by "means" of his wife; the person becomes a bank teller through the hiring process of the employer.

13. But Simon Magus (Acts 8) stands as a perpetual warning that neither the call nor the calling dares to be usurped or arrogated to oneself improperly. As culpable as it is to usurp the role of husband, wife, mayor, or firefighter that is not rightfully one's own, so it is equally wrong to usurp the role (calling) of pastor of God's people when that calling has not been rightfully and properly "mediated."

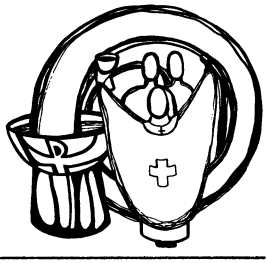
14. Only the people of God as trustees of the means of grace (i.e., church, congregation, synod, or any duly authorized and representative agency of the same) are the "medium" through which God calls a person to the Christian calling of pastor, viz., one who shepherds the flock by witnessing publicly to the gift of forgiveness, in the name and on behalf of those who jointly confess the divine Forgiver.

15. This Christian calling is in its essence no different from the "vocation" of Christians in whatever station of life the call of forgiveness reaches them — for in its essence it is ministry of reconciliation and nothing else. And ministering reconciliation is the purpose, role, and function of all Christians in and through the vocation in which God has called them to forgiveness — forgiveness received and forgiveness to be shared.

16. While there is no difference in essence among the various Christian callings, we may recognize distinctions as to form. That is to say, the forms in which the one ministry of reconciliation is fulfilled are many and various. Thus, the pastorate is one form and parenthood another, of one and the same ministry. Also, within the "public" ministry itself there are various forms (or Christian callings), such as teaching, administration, musical service, youth leadership, pastoral ministry as such, and so on as circumstances may require.

17. Since the means of grace are entrusted, in the first instance, not to individuals, but to the church; and, more particularly, since the Holy Supper is the *Lord's* Supper, and by him in turn given, not to Christians as individuals, but to the church to be the *church's* eucharistic supper, it follows that no individual Christian is to "lord it" over the sacrament or the churchly proclamation of the Gospel. Only by the "call" of the church, in the name of the church's Lord, is anyone authorized to be on the church's behalf a "servant of the Word," and thus preside over the *church's* celebration of the sacrament and proclamation of the Gospel.

18. To summarize: The ministry of reconciliation, in a Christian calling, is dependent only on the means through which God addresses the "call." That "call" is as divine in its address to the plumber as to the parish pastor; to the elementary school teacher as to the synodical president; to the woman who is wife, mother, and business executive as



to the seminary professor. And in all cases the content of the call is identical — it is the divine call of forgiveness: forgiveness received and forgiveness to be shared.

II. In Practice

1. What passes as "theology" of the call in current Lutheranism is in great measure a heterogeneous reflection of 17th century dogmatism, Roman Catholic sacerdotalism, and Calvinist legalism. Whatever evangelical quality still persists is the consequence not so much of a clear understanding, as of the "fortunate inconsistency" that characterizes even theologians whom the Gospel of forgiveness has touched.

2. The fundamental error in Lutheranism has been to allow theological discussion of the call to become a debate over whether the ministry is derived from the apostolate on the one hand, or from the priesthood of all believers on the other.

3. In fact, the ministry is derived neither from the apostolate nor from the priesthood of all believers, but solely and entirely from the nature of the Gospel itself as God's call of forgiveness. It is the Gospel of forgiveness — not apostolate or priesthood of believers — that makes the ministry what God intends it be, a ministry of reconciliation for poor sinners.

4. Since the New Testament lays down no *law* regarding any specific form in which the public ministry of Gospel proclamation is to be implemented, it has from the very outset been left to the church to develop and institute from time to time such forms and offices as would, under given historical circumstances, best serve the edification and nurture of the people of God.

5. This fact is illustrated throughout the centuries of the church's actual history, as the concept and actualization of the ministerial office (or offices) underwent frequent changes, great and small — as indeed did also many other ecclesiastical forms, functions, and customs. This process began already in the church's earliest decades, as the New Testament itself amply attests.

6. Thus, both an evangelical understanding and historical evidence combine to demonstrate that the congregational pastorate as such (to mention only one form of the ministry) is not a biblical institution, but in every instance a historically conditioned and contingent concept. That is to say, the pastorate is — at any given time and in any given place — simply that which the church in her freedom chooses so to designate.

7. The dominically instituted preaching of the Gospel as described and exemplified by the New Testament must not be simplistically identified or equated — one to one — with the pastorate as this may be established by a particular congregation or in the ecclesiastical structure of a given synod or church body.

8. All the modes and offices, formal and informal, in which and through

which the proclamation of Christ's Gospel, the divine call of forgiveness, takes place are related to that function as species are to the genus. The species evolve and change, the genus does not.

9. To alter the metaphor, and perhaps state the point more boldly: in, with, and under the secular forms in which Christians find their calling — parenthood, civil service, pastorate, administration, public relations, farming, housekeeping, etc., etc. — there is given, to be received and shared, the call of forgiveness, the ministry of reconciliation. This is true because the kingdom of God is the realm and reign of forgiveness; and the call into the kingdom — by whatever proper means (*media*) — is the call to actualize forgiveness in word and deed.

10. From all that has been said thus far, both as to principle and as to practice, it follows that our popular understanding of "ordination" requires clarification, if not correction.

11. Essential to any evangelical understanding of ordination is the recognition that the chief and highest "order" to which anyone can be called is the order of laity (*laos*: the people of God). Entry (ordination) to this order is by Holy Baptism. All other "holy orders" derive from this initial and inalienable ordination.

12. Because it is that gift that is given with the divine call of forgiveness, this order alone remains the Christian's possession and status forever. All other orders are temporary. Such are the "holy orders" of which the Small Catechism speaks in the Table of Duties: officials of government, citizens, husbands, wives, children, employees, employers, youth, widows, elders, pastors, bishops.

13. It would not be inappropriate, if the church should ever be so minded, to "ordain" Christians into whichever of these orders were pertinent at any given time by virtue of the individual's "calling."

14. But since custom has unduly restricted the concept of ordination to the office of the clergy, it is especially this practice that requires our attention. Despite popular notions (arising first from Roman Catholic sacerdotalism, but emergent also in Calvinist-influenced Protestantism) the ordination of Lutheran candidates for the public ministry is nothing else than the formal installation into their initial field of churchly service.

15. This ordination, or installation, is a Christian ceremony of human origin through which the legitimacy of the "call" in its issuance and acceptance is publicly acknowledged, and attendant mutual responsibilities expressly recognized, with prayer for the Holy Spirit's gracious strength to fulfill those responsibilities.

16. Apart from the specific call there is neither status nor calling as pastor, much less as "indelible character" presumptively acquired through ordination.

17. Since the Gospel we are called to share is the *unconditional* call of God's forgiveness, its public proclamation on



behalf of the church dare not be made contingent or dependent on the "character" of the proclaimer. Rather, it is the call of forgiveness itself, in the form of the call to preach to and for a certain group of God's people, that alone gives the proclaimer the right (*ius vocationis*) to forgive sins publicly in the name of Jesus Christ.

18. Working out the practical implications of this evangelical theology of the call will enable Lutherans to get beyond misguided and fruitless debate over women's ordination, ordination of teachers, clergy status of synodical presidents, and other *adiaphora*, in order to get back to the inexhaustible treasure of the Gospel itself.

Call, Public Ministry, and Catholicity

(A reply to *Theses* by **Leonard Klein**, pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Long Island City, NY.)

I see problems with Jungkuntz' theories in at least three areas. The first and chief is his use of the word "call." The word is used to mean different things at different places. At some points it refers to the universal call that is the Gospel, at others to specific individual vocations. The term call is applied to actions ranging from creation to ordination. The call of the church to those it ordains for public ministry is seen as a particular case of the baptismal vocation of all Christians. Although the word call can be and is used for such various ideas, the usage does not in and of itself establish a consistent single meaning or create a series of logical connections between the different uses of the word.

If the argument of the theses fails, as I believe that it does, it is largely because too much of its substance rests on one word and the range of its uses. For instance, the vocation as Christians that is given to us in baptism is not the same as the vocations of Christians in the created order, and the church's public call of ministers is yet another matter. As soon as more precise definitions and more careful distinctions among the uses are made, the overall fabric of the theses unravels, and we are left with concepts that are not related so neatly as first appears.

Jungkuntz underscores an important Lutheran concept — that all vocations of Christians are true and divine callings and not just those of public ministers. I wish, however, that he had pointed his critique in another direction. It seems to be pointed at clericalism, but in our day I do not think that that is the problem. The problem lies in a kind of ecclesiology that is so eager to call everyone a minister that authentic vocations in the world seem to take a back seat to the church's work. When Jungkuntz identifies with the pastorate and parenthood as forms of "the one ministry of reconciliation," he exemplifies the problem perfectly. My vocation as parent is not a ministry of re-

conciliation, and calling it one does not glorify it but diminishes its real value. The pastoral office which I bear is a ministry of reconciliation. As such, it does not need to be justified or explained any more than my vocation as parent needs to be sacralized as part of the order of redemption.

It is in this effort to explain, indeed, to excuse the existence of the public ministry that my second major objection lies. In II.3 he repudiates the effort to derive the office either from the apostolate or from the universal priesthood, but he seems to fall into the worse trap, endemic these days, of trying to show why we need pastors at all. And in the end he seems to derive the office from his theology of the call anyway. That in turn looks very much like the old derivation of it from the universal priesthood. Frankly I believe that the whole issue is a clerical hang-up; most lay people just wish the clergy would get on with their work. The biblical mandate for kerygma and leadership is clear enough. The real challenge is to exercise such leadership faithfully, not to show why it is necessary.

My third disagreement follows from the second, for if it is mistaken to expend theological energy on justifying the existence of the clerical office, it is also a mistake to abstract discussion of the office from its historical situation. Lutheranism is a movement within the Catholic Church of the West, and excepting certain abuses and the requirement of episcopal ordination our ministry is the priesthood of the Catholic Church. Theological reflection on it may take many directions, but I believe that Lutherans are ecumenically and confessionally obliged to maintain the office in as close to the shape as we have received it as possible. I am, therefore, more reluctant to endorse a statement such as II.14 that "ordination . . . is nothing else than the formal installation into the candidate's initial field of churchly service." There was a Missouri Synod tradition of similar shape, but I believe that it is neither confessional nor scriptural. (Can you imagine St. Paul being recommissioned or Luther being reordained?) I fear that the theses are Lutheran in the sectarian sense of the word.

Because of these and other objections, I do not agree that the theses free us from the problems listed at the close. I believe that they are very much with us regardless of any doctrine of the call. Surely God calls both men and women through baptism, but we may still debate whether the church acts rightly in calling or refusing to call women to be pastors. The meaning of the unique Missouri Synod — and now AELC — practice of calling people as teachers remains as unclear as ever, regardless of any doctrine of the call. And it must still be asked whether the one who functions as bishop, overseeing the life of Word and Sacrament in a larger Christian community, could ever be one who did not hold the office that he must oversee and ad-



minister. Even if in a burst of aggressive Lutheranism we agree that ordination is an *adiaphoron*, the fifth and fourteenth articles of the Augsburg Confession will force all the issues back on us.

I believe that the theses address the wrong question. The question is not so much how do we reconstruct the church after the impact of the Gospel, but how do we bring the church as we find it, and found it in the sixteenth century, into conformity with the dogma of justification by grace through faith. The centrality of the gospel norms and forms church practice and teaching — that is the dogmatic claim of Lutheranism. Discussion of God's unilateral and gracious call is a necessary part of the continuing Reformation of the church by this standard. It can help conform our practice to our teaching, but these theses on the call do not succeed in forming a basis for a Lutheran understanding of the pastoral office. They rest too much on the ambiguity of a word and too little on the catholic substance of the Lutheran Reformation.

Called to Represent God: Beyond Functionalism

(A reply to *Theses* by **Richard Koenig**, editor, *Partners*, Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia, PA.)

Dick Jungkuntz' "Theses Toward A Lutheran Theology Of The Call" is guilty of false advertising. After leading out from "the divine call *of* forgiveness" (I:12), an odd phrase that I for one have never encountered, the author soon moves on to speak about such things as " 'the' ministry, ministry, public ministry, the ministerial office, the pastorate and ordination." So Jungkuntz' theses are really "Theses Toward A Lutheran Theology of The Ministry."

Now, that is perfectly all right with me, and the attempt to ground ministry in the call of God, or better, the God who calls, though burdened in this instance by a forced linkage to the concept of forgiveness, is promising. I am a bit surprised, however, at Jungkuntz' sarcastic putdown of other efforts to develop a contemporary doctrine of the ministry in Lutheranism. The Lutheran Church in America's "A Study of Ministry, 1980," page 8, deliberately seeks to avoid "the fundamental error" Jungkuntz excoriates in II:3, i.e., deriving "the" ministry either from the apostolate or from the priesthood of all believers.

For Jungkuntz "the" ministry is derived "solely and entirely from the nature of the Gospel itself" (II:3). That ministry, according to Jungkuntz, realizes itself in various forms of which the congregational pastorate is only one (II:6). Thus the way is cleared for a solution to some knotty problems of ecclesiastical order and the inclusion of female persons in the pastorate. In addition, the dividing wall of hostility between clergy

and lay persons is dismantled and something celebrated which Jungkuntz does not expressly name but implies, the ministry of the whole people of God.

All of this lies close to the agenda of most main line churches these days. Most of it is to be applauded and affirmed. Nevertheless in some respects I remain a holdout.

Jungkuntz' theses seem to vacillate between an identification of "the" ministry with the congregational pastorate (the public ministry of the ordained person) and the ministry of God through the Gospel. I detect the vacillation in II:2 and II:3, which becomes unintelligible if "the ministry" Jungkuntz seeks to preserve from corruption is the ministry of God through the Gospel. *God's* ministry is hardly liable to derivation from the apostolate or the universal priesthood. But what Jungkuntz must have in mind is the pastorate at least at this location. Later on the public ministry becomes nothing more than a "form" of "the" ministry, but I think Jungkuntz senses some sort of special relation between the ministry of God through the Gospel and the public ministry. About no other "form" of ministry does Jungkuntz make so much commotion.

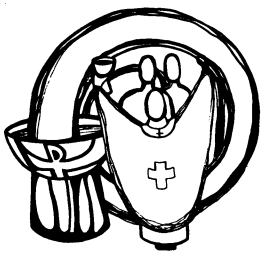
For my part I accept the special relationship and believe it important for the ministry of God through the Gospel as well as the ministry of the whole people of God. If for laudable egalitarian impulses, however, or for even more laudable intentions to sanctify the ministry of the whole people of God the public ministry of the ordained is denatured, the church suffers. The public ministry is called (and here the word is used in its natural sense of "summoning to a task") to represent the God who calls people in judgment and mercy. The public ministry is established neither by historical succession nor contemporary franchise but by God.

I wish to make no brief for clergy privilege or status in the midst of the people of God. I too incline to a functional view of ministry (as does Jungkuntz and the LCA Study) in contrast to a *character indebilis*. However, I want to hold those who function as ministers in the pastorate to their task. Jungkuntz' pastors, I am afraid, would be more the creatures of a congregational election than servants of God; God's office temporaries, so to speak. As difficult as it may be to forge a doctrine of the public ministry that is formed by participation in the ministry of Christ, I still keep looking.

Allowing the Gospel Free Course for Ministry

(A reply to *Theses* by **Martin L. Kretzmann**, missionary to India, Emeritus, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.)

My first reaction to the Jungkuntz theses was the recollection of my father's experience when, as a member of the



Doctrinal Unity Committee in the late 20s, he took a statement on Scripture and inspiration etc. (which had been prepared by an ALC committee member) to a seminary professor for an opinion on the Scriptural correctness of the statement. The answer he received was "*So haben wir nie geredet.*" To which father replied, "I asked whether it was correct," and again received the answer, "We have never spoken like that."

Jungkuntz has taken the matter of the call out of the whole sticky mass of "Who's on first?" or "Who's on top?" and looked at it through the light of the Gospel. This was the perspective of the Reformation doctors and runs through all these theses of the first part of his paper. The disciples of the 17th century Lutheran dogmaticians, as Jungkuntz says in II:1, were more concerned about "nailing down" the results of the Reformation than allowing the Gospel to have free course. They are the people who are inclined to say "We have never spoken like that." With a few notable exceptions, and in varying degrees, that has been the stance of Lutheran theologians of our century.

The implication of the theses in Part I, flowing out of the primacy and centrality of "the only ultimate 'saving' doctrine, namely, the forgiveness of sin," is that incorporation into the body of Christ and, therefore, into his ministry to the world, is the most important and significant element in the life of every believer. The believer's call is to actualize God's call to salvation in one's own life station. This is brought out beautifully and, in my opinion, correctly in theses 10-15 of Part I. We recall that for Luther faith raised the humble toil of the peasant in the field or the housewife in her home to the level of sacred service.

I doubt if the American church, so strongly influenced and shaped in its theology by its surrounding culture, can find room for such a revolutionary understanding of "religious" life. We have become so accustomed to speaking of the "Lord's work" as something exclusively related to the institutional church, and of the public ministry there as the only real service to God, that the inclusion of "the tasks that God commands, like the tasks of one's calling, the administration of public affairs, the administration of the household, married life, and the rearing of children" (Apology Art. XV Tappert ed. p. 219) would cause us to rethink much of our preaching and, certainly, our concept of stewardship. Some years ago a church office issued a stewardship brochure with the title, "How much are you giving to God and how much are you keeping for yourself?" The contents of the pamphlet showed plainly that feeding, clothing, and sheltering the family, rearing the children, cooking, etc. were not part of one's calling to be done in service to God. The "Lord's work" was something the church was doing. It grieves me to hear a Christian business person, who is providing for the family, express the

desire to do the "real" work of the Lord. When we took a wrong turn on this in our theology we messed everything up. Jungkuntz is helping to put us right again.

Every society gets the kind of church it deserves, which is to say that the society determines the shape of the church it can be comfortable with and which will not force members to examine their lifestyles in the light of what the church is saying. Thus the saying, "The church should stick to religion," meaning thereby that religion and life are two different things, also for the believer, is meant as a rebuke to those who believe that life is religion, as Jungkuntz claims in his understanding of the call. Within that understanding there is room for a calling which fulfills the work of the public ministry, but it is no more important than any other calling of the Christian. This is something to hold high when we engage in dialogue with other churches, perhaps even the most important perspective on the Gospel which Lutheranism must share.

"Form follows function." Much of what Jungkuntz says in his second part can be summarized in that worn phrase. It is clear that the early church was most flexible in developing its forms. We err when we absolutize the forms which that church developed as if they were of the essence of the Gospel. The early Christians responded to their society and culture in many forms "for the sake of the Gospel." We are called to follow their example, not in the "what" they did, but in an understanding of the "why."

The Call to Prophetic Ministry: Reflections on Jeremiah 1:4-10

Lyn Mehl

Kingston, New York

A recent issue of *Redbook*, a magazine aimed for the average American woman, carried an article entitled "Courage & Pain: Women Who Love God and Defy Their Churches." It told the stories of several valiant women of today's churches.

Sister Theresa Kane, Administrator General of the 5,000 Sisters of Mercy was the first mentioned. On October 7, 1979, this "moderate-conservative" Bronx-born nun dared to address Pope John Paul II. She urged him to "respond by providing the possibility of women as persons being included in all ministries of our church."

As a child in Minnesota, Suzanne Hiatt already knew she was destined to be an Episcopal priest, strange ambition for a girl of the '40s and '50s. In the early '60s, she became one of the first women to enter the Episcopal Theological School with the intent of fulfilling this call. Yet in 1973, a tragic setback occurred as the General Convention of the church soundly defeated a proposal to open the priesthood to women. It was then that she and ten other women decided that waiting for each convention to change its mind was pointless. On July 29, 1974, at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia, these women (soon to become known as the Philadelphia Eleven) were "irregularly" ordained. Hiatt became a clerical renegade, much to the displeasure of the bishops who censured her. When the church did vote in 1976 to ordain women, Hiatt commented, "If we had not followed our conscience, the church would be tossing around the abstract question of women's ordination for the next 25 years."

Catherine Stewart-Roache also knew from childhood that she wanted to be — not a nun — but a priest, a Roman Catholic priest! She went through parochial school, silently searching for saints who had defied the model of obedient Catholic womanhood. Only after marrying and bearing five children did she announce her "call" to a supporting husband and a set of scandalized parents. Armed with a Doctorate from the Jesuit School of Theology, she and 1,300 other activists founded the Women's Ordination Conference. Hope for fulfillment of their callings grew until 1977, when Pope Paul VI was urged to discourage "false hopes" by stating women cannot be priests because they don't bear a "natural resemblance to Christ." Pope John Paul II's reaffirmation of this leaves Catherine and other women in much pain. Catherine Stewart-Roache was quietly in attendance as Sister Theresa Kane spoke her conscience to Pope John Paul II.

The last person mentioned was Sonia Johnson, a Mormon housewife and mother of four. After many tears and after devouring every feminist book she could find, she and three other women came into the open as Mormons for ERA. She was excommunicated — the harshest thing her church could do for it means, according to Mormon doctrine, that she will be separated from her husband and children in heaven. "You ask me, 'Why

not repudiate the Church?' I can't do it because I do still feel a lot of loyalty to it. Its teachings have such power to make people happy. *It seems that you have a responsibility to see that things you love don't get ruined.*"

What do these women and the thousands like them in our churches today have to do with an Old Testament prophet like Jeremiah? What do these two topics have to say to the twentieth century church?

In the year 627 B.C.E., a youth named Jeremiah, son of the priest Hilkiah, received a call from the Lord to be his "mouthpiece." He was not to marry nor was he to take part in the sacred social rituals of burial or weddings. Instead, he was to call his people back to the covenant. Only in executing "justice one with another" and turning from their other "gods" would the people of Israel avoid destruction.

This was an awesome task for a youth and Jeremiah dared to voice his objection. How dare he speak up against priests and princes and elders? And yet Yahweh had an answer: Jeremiah had been sanctified at his formation in the womb. Before his conception he had been appointed a prophet to the nations! "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you."

One of the chief characteristics of Old Testament calls is the prophet's moment of hesitation. Jeremiah was only a youth, unable to speak. Isaiah was a man of "unclean lips." Gideon was from the "wrong side of the tracks." Moses was "slow of speech and of tongue," and Jonah didn't even bother to propose an excuse. He just got on the boat and went in the opposite direction. And yet, despite their arguments that they were the wrong person for the job, the Lord always got his way, whatever the cost.

Jeremiah was honest with himself, with God, and with the people he so deeply loved. Convulsed by the power of the word which Yahweh had put in his mouth, he had no choice but to speak to the sins and injustices which confronted him on all sides. He knew that to verbalize the words of destruction which the Lord had placed in his mouth was to place them into action. Hence his agony.

For Jeremiah, being a prophet at times resulted in a joyful outburst: "I ate thy words and they became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord of Hosts." (15:16) And yet, we also see in Jeremiah the deep personal cost which this calling meant. He truly "wrestled" and cried to God in the beautifully eloquent poetry which earned him the title the "Weeping Prophet." Listen to his torment: "My grief is beyond healing, my heart is sick within me." (8:18) "You have deceived me . . . you are stronger than I . . . I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me." (20:7) "My heart is broken within me, all my



bones shake; I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the Lord and because of his holy words." (23:9) "If I say 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,' there is in my heart as it were a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot." (20:9) Finally, his deepest agony: "Cursed be the day on which I was born! The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed! Why did I come forth from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?" (20:14 and 18)

Thus, in Jeremiah, one has the picture of a person torn between the tension of desiring a "normal" life with friends, love, family, and peace and the more austere call which Yahweh issued. The call gave him no rest or peace. He was forced to speak words that would alienate him from his people and bring about their destruction unless they repented. The only sustenance he could get was in knowing that he was in fact called and that the God of Justice was with him. It was this knowledge that allowed him to speak of a new covenant, a time when "they shall all know me (the Lord) from the least of them to the greatest."

Are there prophets in the church today? I am not sure we will ever see a prophet who equals Jeremiah, but prophetic voices are alive in the church, and they abound in the "Christian feminist" spirit. Yet there is pain among many women who feel excluded from *full* participation in the clergy. There are sisters, even brothers, who are offended by male-oriented language in liturgy and grieved because in many areas of church life women are still second-class citizens.

One the eve of the Anglican Lambeth Conference, when the issue of ordination of women was to be decided, a bishop stated why he was not willing to fight for the proposal: "We don't want that sort of confrontation here; whatever the rights and wrongs it is best to leave it for a time. . . . Many bishops, especially from the third world, have other things which to them are more important."

The reference to the third world bishops' statement is an illustration of a seldom spoken, but deeply held belief that matters pertaining to women are not really of vital concern. Sadly enough, this non-verbalized feeling is not held just by conservatives. Moderates and liberals share equal guilt. It is more "fashionable" to be concerned about world hunger, nuclear disarmament and Apartheid. This is not to say that these issues are not legitimate. Christians *should* be doing all in their power to address these concerns. Yet interestingly enough, these are issues over which the church can pontificate for years and probably do very little about, while such issues as sexist language, the ordination of women, and the restoration of dignity to the female half of the world's population are areas where visible improvement could quickly be seen.

In my own Lutheran Church this same trivialization can be seen. Two issues are

of dominant concern right now. The first is the ongoing Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue. The other is the proposal for merger of the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. Both are issues which other feminist sisters and I support. Yet there is great irony in the reason given for pursuing these goals. The justification given is that all people should be one — our Lord's High Priestly Prayer. If this reason is valid for these undertakings (and I believe it is), is it not also valid for a never-ceasing confrontation of legally and socially-based sex discrimination which still pervades our church and society?

One hears the argument, "You've been 'given' the right of ordination; what more do you want? There is no great hue and cry from the pew to do anything more on this issue." And yet is there a great demand from the pew for the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue or Lutheran merger? Was there a great clamor from the Black slaves in the 1860s to be freed? The answer to all three questions is "No." Yet that did not deter the church from recognizing the need for action in these areas. Is the issue of women's rights more trivial and thus not worth disturbing those who do not feel the pain of discrimination? Is the torment of those women whose "calling" to ministry has been frustrated to be ignored? Should we not ponder their feelings of guilt over not being content with traditional women's values and their fear of being isolated not only from the male clergy but from their own lay sisters who do not understand? And ultimately, what will happen to the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue when it finally looks at the place of women? What do we Lutherans do with the papal announcements that women cannot be ordained because they were not included among the apostles and do not bear a physical resemblance to Christ? Will the God-given rights of women become a trivial issue then, also?

Thousands of Christian women in the church are hurting. Many in the secular world ask us why we remain in an institution so far at the end of the parade of any social change. We are upbraided as "unfeminine" if we are aggressive debaters in the church, and yet the same church lauds as "intellectual" the male pastor who possesses the same quality. Women have seen a new, Spirit-directed vision of what the church could and should be. It is a family where ALL are allowed to be part of a community that nurtures potential and not polarization, creativity and not conformity, prophecy and not pacification. Women ache over the vast historical waste of human potential in their sisters, yet all too often face exclusion by some sisters because the deeply ingrained sin of self-negation of women has not been considered important enough for the church to address.

Where do we go to find a haven from the words of justice that lie burning inside us? Jeremiah had his faithful scribe-



friend Baruch, probably a few disciples, and above all his God. We women have sympathetic sisters and brothers both in and outside of the church; and again, above all, we have a loving Savior and God with whom we can wrestle and cry and find peace. Jeremiah was told by Yahweh not to pray for his people. The die had already been cast, and the only way the Lord could show love for the people was by virtually destroying them. We, as women, can still pray. We can continue in hope for our church which we dearly love; and we offer ourselves as prophetic voices and committed women.

For what can we pray and hope? I'd like to paraphrase a powerful story from Henri Nouwen's *The Wounded Healer.*

There was a young fugitive trying to hide from the enemy in a small village. The people were kind to her and gave her a place to stay. But when the soldiers who sought her came to the village, they threatened to burn all the houses and kill everyone unless she was turned over before dawn. The people went to their minister for guidance. The minister, torn between turning over the woman or having his people killed, secluded himself in his room reading his Bible for an answer. After a time, his eyes fell upon the words: "It is better that one person dies than that the whole people be lost."

The minister closed the Bible, called the soldiers and told them where the woman was hidden. After the soldiers led her away to be killed, the village people feasted because the minister had saved their lives; but the minister, overcome with a deep sadness, remained in his room. That night an angel came to him and asked, "What have you done?" He said: "I have handed over the fugitive to the enemy." The angel then said: "But do you not know that you have handed over a messiah?" "How could I know?" asked the minister. The angel said: "If, instead of reading your Bible, you had visited this young woman just once and had looked into her eyes, you would have known."

We as women can pray and hope that our church can look into the eyes of suffering sisters, some of whom are sitting right in church on Sunday morning. We can hope and pray that the knowledge that the church has of Christ can be used to talk *with* us instead of to debate *about* us. For the church can become a vital force again in the struggles of today's world, and we, as women, can help in that process as "wounded healers."

A Parable for Birdwatchers and Other Seekers

Dennis Jacobsen

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The story is told of a certain mockingbird named Mory who lived in a kingdom of birds ruled harshly by an eagle, a hawk and an owl. As a mockingbird, Mory enjoyed the mysterious gift of universal language, a gift that made him and his kind seem especially religious and mystical to other birds. According to ancient tradition, the gift of universal language had been bestowed on the mockingbirds for a very special purpose, a purpose which was revealed in the Great Secret. Now none of the mockingbirds actually knew what the Great Secret was — so great was its secrecy and obscure its origins — but they would faithfully gather once a week to sing about the Great Secret and to hear various meditations on its implications for daily living.

On occasion, the more learned and scholarly mockingbirds would conduct seminars on such topics as: "The Great Secret and the Emergence of Analogical Language" or "The Great Secret: Revelatory Knowledge and the Modern Bird" or "East Meets West: Socio-Economic Patterns in the Great Secret." Mory often attended such seminars but usually left feeling a bit stupid and perplexed.

Like all the mockingbirds, Mory would spend each afternoon flying with the eagle, the hawk and the owl. First, he would soar over the valley behind the eagle. When the eagle cried out: "All this belongs to the eagle! All this belongs to the eagle!" then Morey and the other mockingbirds would cry out in the language of the eagle: "All this belongs to the eagle! All this belongs to the eagle!" At this cry all other birds would scatter to get out of the eagle's way and would hurry to bring gifts of food to the eagle's nest. This made Mory feel lordly and rather important.

Then Mory would join flight with the hawk. After sharpening his claws and beak, the hawk would pierce the sky like an arrow, shriek: "Killing creates peace! Killing creates peace!" and then drop down like a missile on some scurrying mouse or rabbit. As the hawk made its deadly descent, Mory would spread his little wings with the other mockingbirds and shriek in the language of the hawk: "Killing creates peace! Killing creates peace!" This made Mory feel fierce and dangerous.

Finally, Mory would fly to the tree of judgment and land on a leafless branch beneath the owl. Birds who had been accused of violating the rules of the kingdom were brought before the owl. The owl would squint and scowl and say: "Whooo dares offend? Judgment awaits! Whooo dares offend? Judgment awaits!" Then Mory would puff himself up and say with the other mockingbirds in the language of the owl: "Whooo dares offend? Judgment awaits! Whooo dares offend? Judgment awaits!" This made Mory feel wise and powerful.

As might be expected in such a kingdom, Mory and the other mockingbirds were granted a certain status by the



eagle, the hawk and the owl. After all, the rulers of the birds knew that their words were given a kind of divine reinforcement when they were repeated by the religious mockingbirds. It gave them the feeling that they ruled by some holy ordinance, by some godly sanction. The eagle, the hawk and the owl were well aware that the mockingbirds contributed in no small way to the state of orderly obedience which prevailed in the kingdom.

One night Mory had a dream, some would say a vision, as he slept. In his dream, or vision, a magnificent, snow white dove appeared to him and with the voice of the Ages said: "To know the Great Secret, consider the sparrow. To know the Great Secret, consider the sparrow." And then the magnificent dove disappeared like a dream or a vision. Mory awoke in a dreadful sweat. He went sleepless the rest of the night. In the morning, the other mockingbirds wondered at Mory's bloodshot eyes and at his troubled silence.

That afternoon, as the other mockingbirds joined flight with the eagle, the hawk and the owl, Mory flew to the dismal part of the valley where the sparrows lived. He spent the whole day in reflection and study of the sparrows. He noticed that the sparrows worked hard but that they had little for themselves. Much of the food they gathered went as a daily gift to the eagle. Much of their work was done for the hawk who ordered them to bury the carcasses of his kills and to construct monuments in his honor. Much of what the sparrows owned went to the owl who meted out fines to them for various offenses. And this was also noteworthy about the sparrows: They never sang. They seemed so terribly burdened that they never sang.

Mory was troubled. His eyes had provided unsettling food to his mind and his heart that day. He returned to his home that night without the usual feeling of vicarious power and self-importance. Something was stirring and moving inside of him. He thought he was beginning to understand the Great Secret, but he could not give it words. The other mockingbirds wondered at his appearance: he looked like he was in deep sorrow but also in deep rapture.

That night Mory had another dream. Some would say another vision. The magnificent, snow white dove appeared to him again and with a look of deep love whispered: "To speak the Great Secret, speak your heart. To speak the Great Secret, speak your heart." And then the magnificent dove disappeared like a dream or a vision. Mory awoke in a start and remained sleepless the rest of the night. In the morning, the other mockingbirds grew fearful at the sight of Mory, who had a terrible, passionate look about him.

That afternoon, Mory joined the other mockingbirds in flight with the eagle, the hawk and the owl. He soared over the valley behind the eagle. But when the eagle cried out: "All this belongs to

the eagle! All this belongs to the eagle!" Mory cried out in a voice greater than all the mockingbirds: "All this belongs to all! All this belongs to all!" The other mockingbirds shrieked in horror. The eagle drew back in flight as if stunned.

Then Mory joined flight with the hawk. As the hawk pierced the sky like an arrow and shrieked: "Killing creates peace! Killing creates peace!", Mory cried out in a voice greater than all the mockingbirds: "Peace creates peace! Peace creates peace!" and then dove in front of the hawk to deflect his flight from his prey. Most of the mockingbirds screamed at Mory in fear and dismay. But some looked reflective and were silent. The hawk veered off target in confusion and then angrily soared off to consult with the eagle.

Then Mory flew to the tree of judgment and landed on the leafless branch beneath the owl. A sparrow was brought to the owl for trial. When the owl squinted and scowled and said: "Whooo dares offend? Judgment awaits! Whooo dares offend? Judgment awaits!", Mory hopped down in front of the sparrow and said quietly to the owl, "Whooo are you to judge? Whooo are you to judge?" Most of the mockingbirds turned their backs on Mory in shame. But some nodded their heads slowly in agreement.

As might be expected in such a kingdom, the peculiar actions of Mory had some immediate consequences. Three things are said to have happened in the kingdom of the birds that evening. Two of them are certain; the third is only a rumor. First, the eagle, the hawk and the owl tore Mory to pieces and scattered his unruly feathers throughout the valley as a warning. Second, the sparrows were distinctly heard to be singing. And third, and this is but a rumor, two magnificent, snow white doves were seen to be flying far above the valley in deep, happy conversation.

And of course these questions remain: Did Mory cease to be a mockingbird when he no longer mimicked the eagle, the hawk and the owl? Or is it perhaps when Mory used the gift of universal language to speak a different word that he became a true mockingbird? Some would find the questions too difficult, others too dangerous. The sparrows are said to have their opinion.

The Bomb in the Pew: The Arms Race as Pastoral Concern

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Attending seminary in the late 60s and early 70s provided ample opportunity for consideration of the "prophetic" role of ministry.

Those who thought it appropriate or necessary that the church engage in "social action" felt that prophetic witness was the proper and desirable style for Christians confronting the evils of the time. In the streets or in demonstrations, we would live our faith and pronounce judgment. Being a prophet seemed more interesting than being a parish pastor.

Other more practical souls felt that good prophets often make poor administrators, and the business of the seminary was to produce capable managers, teachers and preachers. While the church certainly needs prophets, they reasoned, it is best if they are few and far between, to be admired from a distance. Stick to the pastoral ministry.

In my work with the Lutheran Peace Fellowship (founded during World War II to provide a ministry to Lutheran conscientious objectors) and in my questioning the militaristic bent in our society and the madness of the arms race, I am either criticized or praised for making a "prophetic witness." The arms race, however, is primarily a *pastoral* concern, a concern people too often describe as "prophetic" in order to avoid their own responsibility for it. Parish pastors, with all the functions and responsibilities that implies, cannot be true to their calling without addressing and opposing the arms race, and particularly nuclear weapons. The evil of the situation is so pervasive that there is virtually no area of pastoral ministry which is untouched.

Worship. The key question in our worship life is not the color of the book we use, but the identity of the God we serve. Placing our hope and security in military solutions and weapon systems is idolatry. In the celebration of the eucharist, we proclaim and celebrate our union with God; nuclear idolatry, however, witnesses to our increased separation and alienation. The eucharist offers a foretaste of the feast to come; the bomb presents a vision of the famine that can be. Without a vital and faithful worship life, we cannot expect people to have the strength to withstand the fears, lies, tricks, and other inducements of the powers of this world.

Preaching. Probably the most chilling comment I have ever heard from a church member occurred while I was conducting an adult bible study at a church camp. I had made a brief presentation about the arms race, and my partner had talked a bit about South Africa. Much of this was new to our listeners, but they were receptive. Then one woman from a suburban midle-class congregation said, "You know, our pastor never talks about anything that has to do with my life." She meant not only the "big" issues, but also her own personal concerns. Though her husband was an alcoholic, she had never heard her pastor acknowledge that people in that commu-

nity have such a problem. My point here is not to judge that pastor, but to suggest that there might be a greater longing and openness to hearing the Gospel's impact on day-to-day life than pastors imagine. Unless we assume that people keep showing up on Sunday because of our charm, we have to recognize that people long to hear how God's word means something real in their lives. Perhaps pastors are not completely sure that it does. People are uncertain, frightened, and confused. Threatened by inflation, other people, and nuclear annihilation, they are seeking a word of hope in times of despair. If we cannot proclaim life in the face of death, we are only noisy gongs and clanging bells.

Counseling. The more we recognize the personal implications of the arms race, the more we will recognize opportunities for ministry with individuals and in communities. The variety of counseling needs that arise from the arms race is broad and not always obvious. Recent events suggest the need for counseling to aid young people in determining their moral stance toward draft registration. Beyond this, there will be chances for vocational counseling, for young and old, as people set out to choose a career, or feel the need for change. Engineers or other workers might seek new careers, for example, if they feel that they could use their training and skills in more constructive fields than missile design. Other workers might want to seek something more secure than the vagaries of employment which fluctuate with government contracts. In a general sense, people may need help coping with fears and uncertainties of the world situation. A very specific idea which deserves consideration is preparation by the pastor to work with cancer victims and their families. An increased cancer epidemic is a likely pay-off for our nuclear gambling.

Education. Educational ministry in this regard is loaded with possibilities, but the problem is finding materials and resources suitable for congregational use. It may be that Lutheran publishing houses and agencies do not produce materials in this field because they do not perceive an audience or demand, though I don't know that this has stopped them before. Much of what I have in mind falls in areas that might simply be called "awareness training." In a discussion with teenagers from North Dakota, I learned that they didn't feel threatened by nuclear attack because they didn't think North Dakota was a likely target. When I explained that the missiles in the ground, which they thought were their protection, might make their area a more likely target than New York or Los Angeles, they were shocked. They had never considered the implications of living near those weapons. A more troubling experience has been my recent encounters with students at Lutheran Colleges. I was not prepared for the lack of historical awareness, the romantic notions of war, and the ugly stereotypes of the Russian people. Something is lacking in their

educational experience, something their church or youth group could have provided.

Stewardship. I have heard pastors say, "I'd like to talk about the arms race, but my people are only concerned with inflation." This is understandable. What we need to recognize and communicate is that these are not separate issues. The facts and figures speak for themselves. We need to begin the discussion within congregations about the impact of military-spending inflation, high taxes, reduced social services, and the possibilities for converting existing industries to non-military purposes without penalizing the workers.

In addition we need to reflect on the more traditional stewardship work we do. Over the past few years the ALC and the LCA have both conducted major fund drives for mission, for the spread of the Gospel here and abroad. Through hard work and sacrificial giving, more than 60 million dollars has been raised. A worthwhile achievement. A blessing. In the international arms trade, more than that is spent in one day.

I am proposing that pastors take their calling seriously and avoid the fragmented view which would have us forsake real opportunities for ministry or which would have us avoid our ministry by hiding behind labels like prophetic, pastoral, liberal, etc. We are called to be faithful, to proclaim the gospel and to serve. There is a freedom in the gospel which enables us to question the assumptions and dictates of the powers and principalities of the world. In opposing the development, deployment and use of nuclear weapons we are engaged in a ministry of healing in a wounded world. We are being pastors.

I have two fears. The first is that there will be some type of nuclear incident which destroys thousands of people and devastates the countryside. People, horrified, will turn to their pastors and cry in anguish, "How awful! How could we let this happen? What word have you for us?" And the pastor will not be ready to reply.

My greater fear is that no one will bother to ask *us*.

Infant Communion. Part III: Reasons for its Restoration

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As our previous articles indicated, there are no theological barriers to prevent the practice of infant communion. In addition, the study of child development now reveals that basic values and attitudes are formed much earlier than had been previously recognized. This too suggests the desirability of and perhaps even the need for infant communion. The incorporation of children into eucharistic worship is first and foremost a question of their incorporation into the church, and that takes place in baptism. At issue in the question of infant communion is whether the church can take seriously its own claim about baptized infants. Can the church allow the radical theology of infant baptism to influence its worship and ministry?

Baptism and Eucharist

The new baptismal rites of the Lutheran, Episcopal, United Methodist and Roman Catholic communions have three themes in common. The central prayers of each rite make it clear that it is God who has initiated our salvation — God's grace has brought us into covenant. A second emphasis, common to all the new rites, is that of community and its responsibility in the growth of the new child of God. This assumes not only participation by the community in the rite, but a continuing role in the formation of these children. The third emphasis is their identification of the community into which the children are incorporated as eucharistic. All the new rites *allow* that baptisms may take place outside the eucharistic setting, but the community's celebration of the eucharist is clearly preferred for baptisms since it gives expression to the connection between baptism and the fellowship of the eucharist. The presence of these three themes in the baptismal rite presents a proper context for the practice of infant communion.

Even before the Reformation, the separation of baptism from the eucharist promoted the curious idea that the relationship between faith and sacramental reception must be judged differently: one type of faith was required for baptism and another for the eucharist. The New Testament, however, always speaks of baptism as God's work; and in the eucharist, too, it is God who is active — he is the sole subject. The Western Church has placed such great stress on being "worthy" before receiving communion that the idea of the sacrament as free gift has become clouded and occasionally lost.

To speak of infant baptism in terms of proleptic grace does not resolve the problem if this is intended to maintain a distinction between baptism and the eucharist. If the grace of baptism can be received proleptically, why cannot the grace of the eucharist be received proleptically? And if reception of the eucharist requires a degree of understanding and verbal commitment, why does baptism not?

The objective nature of the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist raises the old issue whether the sacraments are effective *ex opere operato*. Interestingly, the Lutheran symbolical books never reject the principle as such, but only as it was applied to an expiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. The original intent of *ex opere operato* was to reject the error that attributes the effect of the sacrament to magic, to the celebrant, or to the participant. Thus, it is worth noting that this principle was originally intended to guard against the private or sectarian use of the sacrament. If the eucharist is to be the possession of the whole baptized church, might it become private or sectarian if it is limited to those members who are counted worthy by achieving a certain intellectual understanding of it? Although that is clearly not what the church wants to say, that is exactly the statement the church seems to make by its continued exclusion of infants and young children from the eucharist.

Eucharist as Norm

The early fathers consistently defined the church as the eucharistic community, gathered under the bishop, to manifest the presence of Christ. The eucharist is described as "that most Christian action," a "crucible in which all the elements which make up the Gospel are combined." It is in and through the eucharist that all Christians come to understand the nature of the church. How can small children come to understand that which is denied them? Our present practice reduces them to observers.

Articles appear every so often on such issues as the type and quality of altar bread. While they are always somewhat apologetic about matters of such "little consequence," they point out that since the sacraments are normative for the church's life, all matters affecting their character and integrity cannot be considered as trivial or indifferent. When baptized members are excluded from the family meal, that affects the character and integrity of the sacrament. *That* should cause serious concern throughout the church.

Sacrament of Nurture

While it is baptism that gives life, it is the eucharist that maintains life. The need for the spiritual nourishment of the eucharist corresponds to the need of the young for physical nourishment. When the Joint Commission on Confirmation redefined the relationship between confirmation and first communion, it recognized the nourishing role of the eucharist, but mistakenly postponed the benefit of participating in this nourishment until approximately ten years of age. Parents who would refuse to nourish a child with food simply because they had already given that child birth would be found guilty of negligence in the courts. Can the church give birth to children through baptism but refuse to nourish them eucharistically? If the church believes that the Holy Spirit bestows gifts through the eucharist, then a young child should not be denied this spiritual food.

Eucharist as Sacrament of Unity

The eucharist both gives expression to Christian unity and creates this unity. To treat those who are baptized as excommunicated, simply because of their age or maturity, does violence to the very character and nature of the church.

Children were very much a part of the history of Israel and of the early church.

The children, for instance, were full participants in Passover: they were in the houses "passed over," they were part of the march out of captivity, and they too went through the waters of the sea. The paschal worship which was designed to relive that history and to recover it was a family celebration, in which the children participated. The evangelists seem to go out of their way to record the events in Jesus' life that involved children. Children are credited by Jesus with a special relationship with God.

If the children were not excluded from the actual events of salvation history, is there any reason that they should be excluded from the worship of the church which seeks to contemporize that history? The experience of God by a child at each and every stage of growth is to be valued. Children are to be valued for their own sake and not just because they are potential adults.

Preschool children have a great need to belong. They have an urgency to participate, and they know exactly what to do and how to do it as they approach the altar. How are we to say to the children, "You are wanted here, you are needed, you are significant, you are acceptable," and still say "No," as they approach the altar? We need to tell children in every possible way that they are children of God.

For the children who are excluded the eucharist may represent only a longer than usual service, a service in which everyone else seems to be a participant in important things. In contrast, a service in which the whole family could share would take advantage of the feelings of worth and belonging found within the family matrix. Receiving young children into full participation is an impressive means of helping them find their place naturally in the worship life of the church.

The social and behavioral sciences have revealed that religious formation takes place long before the child is able to verbalize what is taking place within. The communioning of infants and the very young seeks to establish a parallel between the ordinary development of the children and their sacramental development. The eucharist seems to be the perfect instrument to instruct children because it uses so many forms of communication and because it appeals to all of the senses.

The eucharistic community also needs the child. As with baptism, the whole community is effected by their participation. As adult members participate in the nurture of children, they themselves grow and benefit. They become increasingly aware that it is also God's desire to reach out to strengthen children through this meal. To become aware of God's intention for these children raises their own awareness of their own responsibility for the child's formation.

When the church claims that all members are united in sharing the eucharistic meal, but children are still excluded, the claim of unity rings hollow. This conflict became evident to me while I was serving a congregation with a high percentage of young children. Our "meal of unity" automatically excluded one-third of the membership. How can there be unity when three people prepare to eat, but two of them decide that the third will not be permitted to join in the meal? What would be said of a family relationship if that family consistently excluded one-third of the family from birthday, Christmas and Easter celebrations? No presents would be received until a person could understand and appreciate the gift and the giver. Unfortunately, that is exactly the rationale behind the present practice of denying young children full participation.

Incorporation of Children

One very popular but inadequate effort to incorporate children into the eucharist is the practice of bringing non-communing children to the altar for a blessing. Certainly such a practice serves to help the children feel that they belong, but it falls short of its goal. After becoming accustomed to going to the altar, children soon begin tugging at the sleeve of their parents for more.

The incorporation of infants and young children into the eucharist has taken place, here and there, during the last few years. The Episcopal Church made it possible for infants to be communed, but left the decision to the local bishop. Some bishops have chosen to retain the progression of baptism, confirmation and first communion, thus postponing first communion for a few years. Other bishops have incorporated infant communion in most or all of their congregations. The Presbyterian Church has given the local session the right to make this decision. Within Lutheran bodies the question of infant communion has not yet been given serious consideration at a national level, but a strong congregational polity has permitted some congregations to practice infant communion. Although the Roman Catholic Church has made no conscious effort to move toward infant communion, the normative form of baptism now concludes with a baptismal eucharist. While this has not yet been extended to include infants, there has been a conscious effort to recover a three-fold rite of initiation.

Conclusion

Every sound theological argument used *against* the practice of infant communion can also be interpreted *in favor of* the practice. Infant communion can be supported responsibly. The church can show how grace, faith, sacrament and community relate to support the practice of infant communion just as they support the practice of infant baptism.

Tracing the historical development of initiation and reception into the eucharistic community is difficult, but to do so reveals a practice of infant communion in the Western Church of surprising scope and duration. The decisions which led to the end of infant communion and gave rise to the present separate rites of baptism, confirmation, and first communion no longer seem as sound or convincing as they may have at one time. We can hardly dismiss with a "so what" a practice that can be found within the Western Church from at least the third to the sixteenth century and throughout the history of the Eastern Church. To deny the practice of infant communion by giving preeminence to the tradition of the last four centuries seems very shortsighted.

A great deal has been learned within the last few years about child development. The learning and growth that take place within the pre-school years and the impact of these years upon later development are absolutely staggering. It is at this time that children seek to relate to their environment, to establish relationships, and to belong. This suggests that somewhere within the first five years of life a child will be especially receptive to the experience of first communion.

For the benefit of the children and the entire community, communion should begin with and continue from baptismal eucharist. While it is impossible to assess the value and benefit that communing would have for a child before age three, so much is happening to the child during these years that the church should anticipate the child's need, rather than risk a late response.

Dreams and their Theological Significance in the Biblical Tradition

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As the author of the letter to the Hebrews declared, "In many ways God spoke to our forebears." The modes of revelation in the Old Testament varied from external phenomena, such as the forces of nature, to internal phenomena, such as visions, voices, and dreams. Some have even suggested that history itself was a form of revelation.

The intriguing study of one of those phenomena, dreams, cuts across many boundaries of scholarly study. Students find themselves immersed not only in textual and form-critical study of the biblical text, but also ancient Near Eastern texts, the phenomena of comparative religions, and psychological studies. We shall restrict our study to dreams in the biblical tradition and their implications for Christians today.

Dreams in the Old Testament

The dream was one way in which God could communicate to people, and the dream report was the literary form which could be used to describe such a religious experience. Dream reports abound primarily in the books of Genesis, Daniel, and the infancy narratives of the Gospel of Matthew.[1] The dream report in the Old Testament is not a psychological phenomenon, capable of analysis by a modern therapist. Dreams do not testify to the psychological status of the biblical characters, but they are formal reports by a theologian who seeks to testify to the divine-human encounter in an accepted form.[2] Two formal patterns of dream report exist in the Bible.

As we read the dream accounts, the repetition of certain expressions becomes evident: "And God came to (name of human recipient) in a night dream, and he said, 'Behold, . . . (message).' "[3] The introductory "behold" or a vocative is followed by a divine self-identification (Gen. 28:13, 31:13, 46:3). Then come either an assurance of divine presence (Gen. 28:13-15, 46:2-3, 1 Kings 3:5-15), directions for the dreamer to follow (Gen. 31:12, 46:2-3, Num. 22:20), or warnings (Gen. 20:3, 31:24). The dream report may also contain human dialogue, usually a simple response (Gen. 20:4-5, 31:11, 46:2, Num. 22:10-11, 1 Kings 3:6-9). Finally, the accounts record that the dreamer awoke or the dream ended (Gen. 20:8, 28:16, 1 Kings 3:15).[4] Thus the pattern for these dream reports: 1) theophany, 2) name of recipient, 3) reference to dream, 4) time, 5) address formula, 6) message, and 7) termination.

Dream reports in the Joseph cycle (Gen. 37, 39-50) and the book of Daniel (2-4) are similar but more complex: 1) announcement of the dream, "I have had a dream," 2) an introductory formula, "behold, in my dream I saw," 3) a description which includes the scene and the unfolding action, 4) a formula of interpretation, "this is the meaning of the dream," plus an identification of the component symbols, and the overall meaning, and 5) report of fulfillment.[5] In these accounts symbolic visual im-

agery replaces the auditory message of God. Visual dreams require an interpreter to unlock the mystery of the symbols and reveal the impending course of events. Interpreters can do this only with the aid of God so that their function appears more like a prophet than a professional dream interpreter who might use manuals and other divinatory aids. God is the source of all revelation and only chosen spokespersons can speak a prophetic word; professional divination is false and doomed to failure. These symbolic dreams come in pairs (e.g. Gen. 37:5-7, 9), and this may be an attempt to underscore their veracity. It is likely that the Daniel dreams have been created to parallel the Joseph dreams, for in both we find: 1) a man of God who decodes symbols only with divine help, 2) this interpreter is a young Jewish prisoner in a foreign land, 3) professional dream interpreters have failed the ruler, 4) God brings the dream to pass, and its interpretation is said to be certain, 5) the young man is elevated from his lowly condition, and 6) the heathen praise God.

The biblical authors give dream reports in a stylized literary format that reflects the accepted style of that day and demonstrates a respect for God by describing the encounter with liturgical propriety. The biblical authors used traditional forms, but as good narrators they may often have altered the form for literary effect. The exegete should not become obsessed with particular details of each narrative, but should take note of the general form and how it is modified in a particular instance. The form and structure of the text, therefore, have a message to communicate, in addition to the words of the narrative. The exegete who finds the message of the form can open up new treasures for modern listeners.

Dreams in the Ancient Near East

Consideration of records from the ancient Near East reveals that the biblical authors borrowed their literary forms from their neighbors. When preachers speak to congregations today, they use

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[1] Old Testament accounts include Gen. 20:1-18 (Abimelech's dream about Sarah), Gen. 28:10-22 (Jacob at Bethel), Gen. 31:10-17 (Jacob warned to flee), Gen. 31:24 (Laban warned), Gen. 37:5-9 (Joseph's early dreams), Gen. 40:5-23 (dreams of the butler and baker), Gen. 41:1-36 (dreams of pharaoh), Dan. 2, 4 (dreams of Nebuchadnezzar), Gen. 46:2-7 (Jacob/Israel told to go to Egypt), Num. 22:8-13, 19-21 (Balaam's dreams), 1 Sam. 3:4-14 (Samuel's experience), and 1 Kings 3:5-15 (Solomon's request). Other accounts may contain dream reports or only dream report fragments. These include: Gen. 15:1-16 (Abraham's covenant), Gen. 21:16-19 (Hagar's experience may be a disintegrated dream report formula), Gen. 22:1-2 (Abraham's commission may have included a dream report at one time), and Gen. 26:24 (Isaac's theophany may be a disintegrated dream report formula).

[2] Andreas Resch, *Der Traum in Heilsplan Gottes: Deutung und Bedeutung des Traums im Alten Testament* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), has attempted to bring modern psychoanalytic categories to the biblical dreams. His results are frequently forced and so insubstantial as to reveal the inadequacy of this methodology.

[3] This formula is found with only slight variation in Gen. 20:3, 6, 20:16, 28:12-13, 31:10-12, 31:24, 46:2, Num. 22:9, 20, and 1 Kings 3:5.

[4] This pattern was also noted by Ernst Ehrlich, *Der Traum im Alten Testament*, BZAW 73 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1953).

[5] The most thorough work was done by A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East: With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream Book* (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 1956), pp. 179-255; "Mantic Dream in the Ancient Near East," *The Dream and Human Societies*, ed. Gustave Edmund von Grunebaum and Roger Callois (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1966), pp. 341-350; and "New Fragments of the Assyrian Dream Book," *Iraq* 31 (1969): 153-165.

language, phrases, and images drawn from the contemporary world. Biblical authors, too, drew upon long established conventions to communicate to their people the great acts of God.

Ancient Near Eastern dream reports fall into three categories;[6] 1) Simple auditory message dreams that include a vision of the deity and an oral message given by the deity to the recipient. 2) Symbolic message dreams in which a simple image would appear or a scene would be acted out in a more complex fashion. Such dreams required the aid of an interpreter, a dream book designed for interpretation, or other divinatory techniques. Both auditory and symbolic message dreams came to significant leaders, and their contents had relevance for the affairs of state. They were recorded in a strictly stylized fashion, for contact with the divine required respect, lest the dreamer and the interpreter both pollute themselves by improper treatment of the divine. 3) Finally, psychological status dreams are mentioned, but they are never recorded, for they brought impurity to the dreamer, and their curse had to be removed by proper cultic action. These are probably the real dreams of common men and women, but alas for the modern psychoanalyst, they are not recorded.

Our total collection of ancient Near Eastern dreams is not very large because dream divination was considered inferior to other divinatory practices, such as cutting open the liver or examining the entrails of sheep. In many periods dream divination had a negative stigma, and dream interpreters were considered inferior necromancers. Still we have garnered a sufficient number of reports to make comparisons and deductions.[7] The pattern which emerges in all the ancient Near Eastern dream reports includes: 1) setting (a reference to recipient, time, place, and general circumstances of the dream theophany), 2) dream content (oral message or visual imagery), 3) termination of the dream (an affirmation that it was truly a dream and an authentic visitation by the deity), and 4) the ultimate fulfillment of the dream.

Consideration of these ancient dreams sheds light on several biblical texts. The same two categories of symbolic dreams and auditory message dreams are found in both the Old Testament and the ancient Near East, a sign that the biblical writers may well have drawn upon existing forms. Even closer similarity is to be discovered when the individual dreams are compared, for comparable technical expressions are found in both sets of dream reports. What is most fascinating is the way in which ancient dreams elucidate biblical material in unexpected fashions. For example, many scholars have considered Samuel's experience in 1 Sam. 3 to be a prophetic call narrative comparable to that of Moses or Jeremiah. Yet its similarity with ancient Near Eastern auditory message dreams is striking. Critics who denied Samuel's experience to be a dream usually pointed to Samuel's physical movement and vocal responses as evidence he was not asleep and therefore not dreaming. But ancient dream reports frequently have the recipient awakened and responsive during the dream theophany. Points of similarity between Samuel's experience and ancient dreams include: 1) setting in a shrine, 2) sleeping recipient, 3) time reference, 4) deity wakes recipient for message, 5) allusion to the deity as coming and standing by the recipient, 6) formula of address, 7) message, 8) dialogue, and 9) formal termination. Thus Samuel's experience can be redefined form-critically as an auditory message dream rather than a prophetic call experience.

The theophany to Solomon in 1 Kings 3:5-15 can be clarified by recourse to the dream experience of Thutmosis IV. This newly ascended pharaoh had a noonday dream while he slept in the shadow of the sphinx. The deity confirmed him as pharaoh and promised divine presence. After the pharaoh awoke, he rode to the capital and proclaimed his legitimation by the deity. In Solomon's dream report God affirms the legitimacy of Solomon's succession to the throne. Perhaps the biblical author molded the narrative material after the Egyptian model to affirm divine sanction of Solomon's reign. Thus the consideration of ancient Near Eastern material helps the reader understand more clearly the intent of the biblical author.

Theological Implications

As we observe many of the dream accounts, we realize they appear in the material attributed to the Elohist. Though this cycle of epic traditions occupies less of our present biblical text than the Yahwist, scholars have been able to deduce some of the Elohist's theological agenda. The Elohist sees God as distant from creation while demanding fear and obedience as human responses. This aura of transcendence requires the Elohist to use more indirect forms of revelation than the anthropomorphic theophanies of the Yahwist. The Elohist has modes of revelation which include the voice from the heavens, the angel of God, cloud and thunder, fire, dreams, and most important, prophets. Even the dream as divine revelation in E is handled carefully, lest people encroach upon it and blaspheme the deity. The biblical dream messages are clearly understandable, or God gives special power to the interpreter. People cannot interpret dreams by their own skill, nor can they force God into giving dream revelation through the ancient process of incubation (sleeping in a temple or shrine and praying for a dream revelation). The dream format testifies to the transcendence of God. Yet at the same time it permits God to direct the flow of history for the welfare of pilgrim people in a personal fashion.

The dream format is a literary and theological device in the hands of this biblical author. Dreams provided the vehicle for affirming theological beliefs — a transcendent God who faithfully directs the flow of history for his people. The exegete should observe the form of the text, not get lost in the details, and move on to the theological message.

The Greater Biblical Tradition

How does the rest of the biblical tradition regard dream phenomena? A review of the biblical references to dreams

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[6] We have historical dream reports from Gudea and Eannatum of Sumer, Naram-Sin of Akkad (from the third millennium B.C.E.), nine dreams by the Hittite Hattushilis and his wife (second millennium B.C.E.), Assyrian dreams by Gyges, Sennacherib, and Ashurbanipal (seventh century B.C.E.), three dreams of Nabonidus (sixth century B.C.E.), Egyptian dreams by Djoser (third millennium B.C.E., though recorded later), Thutmosis IV, Merneptah (both second millennium B.C.E.), Tanutamon (seventh century B.C.E.), Bekhten, Taimhotep, Nektonabos, Sethos, and Ptolemy Soter (fourth to second centuries B.C.E.). Epic literature also contains dream accounts, but these are symbolic message dreams for the most part, while the historical dream reports tend to be auditory message dreams.

[7] Gen. 15:1-6 (?), 20:1-18, 21:16-19, 22:1-2, 28:10-22, 31:10-17, 24, 46:2-7, but there is debate whether the Joseph dreams in Gen. 37, 40-41 are Elohistic or post-exilic. Judges 7:13-15, 1 Sam. 3, and 1 Kings 3 are part of the Deuteronomistic History, which is a northern tradition like the Elohist and may be related to it.

reveals conflicting attitudes toward dreams. Epic and narrative literature views dreams positively, and they may be used as vehicles for divine revelation. Prophetic and related material views dreams as ephemeral or devices of false prophets. In Num. 12:6-8 dreams are seen as a lesser form of revelation, subordinate to the revelation experienced by Moses who spoke to God directly. In Deut. 13:2-6 the speaker admonishes the people to avoid dream interpreters lest they lead the nation to apostasy. In Isa. 29:7-8, Pss. 73:20, 126:1, and Job 20:8 we find an even lower view of dreams, for they are fleeting shadows capable of conveying neither true nor false revelations. The key passages occur in Jeremiah, a prophet who had to contend against rival false prophets who relied upon dream divination among other things. His attack upon the dreams of the false prophets in Jer. 23:25-32, 27:9-10, and 29:8-9 may have been the final blow to discredit dream revelation in the prophetic movement. Jeremiah's position led to the denunciation of dreams in post-exilic prophets like Zechariah (10:2) and Isaiah (65:3-4).

Strangely, the demise of the prophetic movement may have permitted the return to respectability for the dream as revelation. Apocalyptic literature revelled in the dream as a literary device. Joel 3:1, which envisions the day when all people will have dreams and visions, comes out of this apocalyptic milieu. The second century B.C.E. book of Daniel typifies the use of dreams as messages from the divine realm (cf. also Gen. 37:39-50). The first century B.C.E. account in 2 Macc. 15:11-16, however, in which Onias receives a sword from Jeremiah in a dream, may reflect more Greek than biblical influence.

Of the later literature wisdom alone held a critical view of dreams, for wisdom thinkers sought the revelation of God in the orderly and well-structured fabric of creation, which included the received Torah. Dreams for them were a disorderly disruption of this cosmic fabric, which terrify the recipient. (Job 4:12-16, 7:13-14, 33:14-16) Terrifying dreams may be sent by God for punishment of evildoers. (Sir. 40:5-7, Wis. 18:17-19) Only Sir. 34:5-8 admits the possibility of dreams serving as vehicles for revelation, but the reader is encouraged to ignore them, for few dreams really come from God. In general, later wisdom's negative attitude toward dreams may reflect an attempt to counter the positive assessment given by apocalyptic.

Finally, the New Testament contains several dream reports in the infancy narratives of Matthew. Matt. 1:20-24, 2:12, 13, 19-21, and 22 contain five dream reports wherein the human recipient is directed to do something so as to protect the infant Jesus. Divine intervention in the course of human affairs strongly parallels the direction given to the patriarchs in Genesis. The fullest pattern is, "the angel of the Lord (or Lord) appeared to him (Joseph) in a dream and said . . . and Joseph woke up (got up)." The parallel with the Old Testament pattern of auditory message dreams is significant, for here we see: 1) theophany, 2) recipient, 3) dream reference, 4) address, 5) message, and 6) formal termination, the same basic pattern as in Genesis. This may be due to Matthew's orientation to Jewish-Christians. The author uses the well-known Old Testament formula and maintains a respectful distance between God and man (remember Matthew says "kingdom of heaven" not "kingdom of God").

The rest of the New Testament lacks dreams. The reference to the dreams of Pilate's wife in Matt. 27:19 hardly con-

stitutes a dream report. The visions in Acts 16:9, 18:9, 23:11, and 27:23 are not called dreams, and the format is too short to evaluate. Two of the references (18:9, 23:11) refer to appearances of the risen Christ, and the "man of Macedonia" in 16:9 and the "angel of the Lord" in 27:23 may be veiled allusions to the risen Christ again. Herein may be the answer to the sparsity of dream reports. With the coming of Jesus Christ, dreams fade in importance since he is the new and final revelation of God. It is the risen Jesus who speaks in the book of Acts, and the particular mode of revelation is really unimportant. Only in the infancy narratives of Matthew are there full dream reports, but once Jesus, the "new Moses," assumes his teaching ministry in Matthew, dreams are no longer needed. "In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through his son." (Heb. 1:1-2 *TEV)*

Conclusion

This brief journey into form critical and traditio-historical evaluation of biblical texts concerning dreams has unveiled some significant theological insights. The observation of similar language and phrases in various texts can lead to the discovery of a literary form. A form carries theology in a subtle fashion for the medium is the message. The auditory message dream format in Genesis and elsewhere is the way by which the transcendent God, who demands fear and obedience, can communicate to his faithful servants and graciously direct their future. The symbolic dream, which requires interpretation in the Joseph and Daniel narratives, is the way in which God hides truth from the wise (professional foreign divinators) and gives it to the humble and foolish (Jewish youths). The development of biblical attitudes toward dreams tells us that theology comes not without a struggle. What is true for one generation may not be so for another. God is faithful to each generation, but his word prevails in different fashions. Early in Israel's theological tradition dreams were a vehicle for revelation, but in the prophetic movement they were rejected so as to safeguard the uniqueness of prophetic inspiration and the proclamations of "true" prophets. A later stage of theological development saw dreams reaffirmed by apocalyptic. Finally, the dream was a prelude to the final act of revelation in Jesus Christ, a final blaze of glory, before giving way to the One who was greater.

What Will it Take to Reform the Prison System?

Gary Blobaum

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It has been argued that the genius of the New Testament is its insistence on incarnating the tragic and the sublime in the inconsequential and the everyday. An uninterrupted string of also-rans shucks its way through the four gospels, and the evangelists seem unembarrassed to keep them at center stage. Those writers were out of step with their world's sense of the dramatic. There are no eloquent discourses before the Senate; rather it is small talk outside a high priest's palace — between a fisherman and a servant girl no less — which has them rubbing their hands together. A man carries a pitcher of water in Jerusalem, an ill-esteemed government official scrambles up a sycamore tree, a woman washes a rabbi's feet — it is to events like these that the New Testament authors attach world-changing significance.

And, as a matter of fact, just such events chronicled by the New Testament have had that very significance. The rabbi's death, the fisherman's faith, and the high priest's decision have changed the world. And the woman's washing of feet has been told in all the world in memory of her. Events in the lives of history's trivial figures are suddenly seen as tilting the scales of history, and, if one believes it, eternity.

Or is it merely a temptation? If God rules imperceptibly through the minute events of mediocre lives, why bother with political and economic change? Can a religion so wrapped up in 'faith alone' ever mobilize for action? Are we to let ourselves think that the ordinary, everyday actions of Christians in their various stations can bring justice and wholeness to an age which demands complex, ecological solutions? This would seem to be the time for Christians to step out of the small events of ordinary life and walk into the political and economic arena.

In one way or another, many Christians today face this question: does my Christian commitment call me to challenge the whole system, or to work faithfully within the realm of my daily contacts and relationships? I want to study that question by asking it within the contours of a specific, concrete field for Christian work, namely, the American prison system. I am trying to imagine prison chaplains, or Christian guards, officials, or prisoners walking into prison for the first time. Should they turn their Christian resources toward the individuals and specific responsibilities involved in their station, or should they work against the oppression of the system itself? In order to ask this question, I will look first of all at the American ethos from which our present penal system arose. From this starting point I will argue that: 1) American penal practice is guided in a significant way by presuppositions inherited from Puritan theology; 2) those presuppositions force prisoners and prison workers to choose, on a daily basis, between obedience and truthfulness; and 3) that daily choice is the crucial theater for Christian ethics.

A Nation's Choice

Shortly after the American Revolution, a penal reform movement was begun in Philadelphia by Quakers. The Philadelphia proposal called for prisons that would serve as "penitentiaries" where convicted persons might have the solitude to study the Bible, contemplate, and pray. Private cells for reflection replaced public stocks and pillories. This system, soon adopted in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, reflected Quaker theology. The resources for conversion lay within each person, and even a rogue could be redeemed once isolated from an evil environment.

After the Pennsylvania system had taken hold, a different attempt at penal reform, reflecting Puritan theology, was made in New York at Auburn. Here prison life centered around convict labor. This system also grew quickly, and in fact, in 1824, Sing Sing was built from the ground by convict labor provided by Auburn. To Puritans, felons had demonstrated that they were not of the elect. Excluded from redemption, the best that could be done with convict souls was that they should be curbed by discipline and bent to the needs of society.

The sociologist, Kai Erikson, has sensed that the subsequent history of American penology, after the Pennsylvania and New York attempts, is related to the theological conflict between these first two systems. He notes first of all that both prison systems were under scrutiny by different states and countries, and that rivalry broke out. The Auburn system boasted of its modest cost per inmate, and the Pennsylvania prisons pointed to their humane treatment. In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont visited this country with the purpose of comparing the two rival prison systems. They concluded that, "the Philadelphia system produces more honest men, and that of New York more obedient citizens." The question was whether a society could anticipate honesty in itself and potentially in all of its members, or whether, tolerating dishonesty, it could anticipate only obedience.

Criminals, in Puritan theology, had demonstrated that they were not of the predestined elect, that they had no heritage in the 'promise'; thus it was consistent that truthfulness should not be expected of them, only obedience. By God's providence, all things — history, scripture, even unwitting prisoners — must be obedient to the mission of the elect. As for the rivalry between the New York and Pennsylvania systems, the reports of Tocqueville and Beaumont helped establish the Philadelphia model in Europe, while the lure of national destiny contributed to the fact that in this country almost every maximum security prison is modeled after Auburn. In the history of American penology, many other influences would be added to draft the blueprint for today's prisons, but this theological conflict was a pivotal moment.

Prisoners of Deception

"It is time we Americans realized," writes a student of criminology, "that we have probably the most ferocious penal policy in the whole civilized world." But what is most violent about our penal policy may not be the persistent brutality, nor the longer-than-average sentences, nor the death penalty, but rather the bewildering morass of deceit. Coping with dishonesty is a day-to-day requirement of prison life for officials and prisoners alike, and perhaps at the root of the daily weight of untruth is the fundamental self-contradiction that prisons are built for a rehabilitation process which no one seriously expects to hap-

pen. The assumption remains that honest relations are not expected with or among prisoners, nor need the system itself be truthful, for truth serves only the elect. What remains for the prisoner is to be obedient, to play the game.

The routine deceptions of prison existence have been ingeniously chronicled in a little book called *The Time Game* by Anthony Manocchio, a former prison counselor, and Jimmy Dunn, one of Manocchio's former counselees. Their story, in brief, is this: Dunn was first sent to prison at the age of 14, and, though repeatedly released, spent most of his life until age 32 in correctional institutions. Finally Manocchio quit his correctional job, and Dunn was again released. Five years later they met and became friends. Dunn had made a startling turn-about and was himself a guidance counselor for delinquents. It was at this time that Dunn and Manocchio collaborated on their book.

The book is a stereophonic reporting of events and conversations in the institutional life shared by the two authors — first from Dunn's point of view, then Manocchio's. What strikes the reader immediately is that, while the actions and motives of the prison worker and the prisoner are patently clear to the other, each person retains the illusion that his actions were inscrutable. As each event and conversation is related, first from one side and then the other, the intended deceptions and the inevitable self-delusions unfold. But Manocchio and Dunn, in addition to being untruthful with each other, also find it dangerous to be honest with those who are supposedly on their 'side.' Manocchio's daring with the truth threatens his job. And for Dunn to 'tell it like it is' in a group session could jeopardize his life.

Manocchio and Dunn, in their own ways are aware of the self-contradiction implicit in the prison system. Manocchio notes that 'trouble' and 'help' are two of the most common words used in the institution — the inmates asking for help, the staff advising them to stay out of trouble. Manocchio senses, however, that the real situation is that the inmates do not want help, nor does the staff want them to stay out of trouble. Dunn's insight is that, while the prison administration wants to bestow more dignity upon the inmates, the inmates (who prefer to be called 'convicts') get dignity by refusing to be dignified by the administration.

What is indicated here, beneath the talk about help and trouble and dignity, is the permanence of the status of criminals. Manocchio perceives that the convicts do not feel called upon to abandon that status, nor does the staff want them to. And Dunn accepts the negative self-image that had been prepared for him. The truth of the situation seems to be that no one wants a criminal to be anything other than a criminal. This, in tragic fact, is a theme of the book which Dunn validated by his life. He returned to criminal life, losing his job, wife, and dwelling. At the time of the book's publication, he was swaying on the fringes of a life slipping from his grasp.

Why do we expect that a person who has once committed a criminal act will remain a criminal for life? For this question, theology has an old answer. Our sense of relief when a 'criminal element' has been identified becomes a prop for our own sense of identification with law-abidingness. We feel justified. In our American ethos they may take its own particular forms. Behind the practices of the prison system there can still be heard the decree of our ethos that a person fallen so low as to the life of crime is thereby demonstrated to be beyond hope, incorrigible, or — to use our older

parlance for the same thing — damned. Sociologically, it has been argued that we *need* our deviants to mark the parameters of our social existence. The truth about prisons, which we so thoroughly attempt to hide, is that we need convicts — theologically. That is why, unofficially, we operate prisons that are intent on keeping people in criminal activity.

Conclusion

To be honest or to play the game is a question that prisoners and workers alike must face as they try to survive in the penal system. The system demands an obedience that accepts the game as the only way of survival. "Go along with the big Latino," says the old hand to the new guard. "He gets to 'choose' his cell mates. But he's the power around here. Without him we'd need ten more guards." For a prison worker to strive for honesty even within the small perimeter of his work would often mean squaring off against the entire system. And the price for honesty from prisoners themselves has been brutally attested by the recent New Mexico State Penitentiary violence. Those prisoners who try to avail themselves of rehabilitative resources are immediately suspect by the rest of the prison population. The clear message is: "Play the game; don't try to change."

In the prison system, even small acts by ordinary people can do much toward changing the system. Here honesty, even in small matters, is a potent interruption of the game. The daily choice either to be honest or to play the game is, in the prison system, the crucial theater for Christian ethics. By simply being honest, prison workers force the system to change — or they may lose their job. Human honesty may enable a prisoner to turn around the dynamics in his cell block — or it may merit him a tin knife between the ribs. Here the risk of truth is great — but so are the possibilities.

And that, finally, is why all those trivial events recorded in the New Testament were world-revolutionary. Faith in Jesus means that even the small actions of those who associate with Jesus will have great repercussions, but only because, like Jesus, all those who do them are on their way to the cross. For to be associated with him always means to be on the way with him, and to be on the way with him is to be on the road to the cross. On the cross, Jesus broke the system of untruth, including the untruth of our self-justification. As we, too, face up honestly to our theological use of the status of criminals for our own justification, we will do much toward defusing the system.

Offguard

Don't talk to me of intellectual matters
or world problems
or issues of society.
I can go to any one and debate these issues
and solve nothing.
Tell me instead of feelings
and memories
and dreams
and loves — past and present.
Dream aloud with me,
for it is then that we transcend this turbulent troubled world
and enter the world of oneness in shared trust.
Let's lay aside our masks and fears
and dare to be open —
to feel and strip away every shred of doubt,
every cloth of inhibition
and be —
whatever the moment brings.
Let's touch
and feel
and taste each other's tears of joy and sadness
before we must rejoin the other world
and take up our masked roles again.

Lyn Mehl
4/19/79

Divided

I am woman.
Tell me, *please* —
you who make
distinctions —
which Gospel is
for *me*,
which
is not.
The same for all?
Really?
Wel-l-ll — no — not quite,
not here below —
not now?
You must *decide*.
No longer can I live
one way,
believe
another.
It tears me.
I am woman.

Ruth Bretscher Ressmeyer
5/20/80

Books Worth Discussing: James H. Cone. *God of the Oppressed*[1]

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Sometimes one is rather late in reading an important book like James H. Cone's *God of the Oppressed.* A current review of Cone's book suggests that his thought remains applicable and painfully topical for a society which continues to permit and foster, at personal and institutional levels, racial servitude. We need to continue to listen to Cone's words and respond to them.

Cone holds that God's word speaks to historical situations; the gospel is not an abstract, universal principle that pertains to all people in general, but a specific message for particular historical circumstances. Cone supports this assertion by appealing to Old and New Testament exegesis, which illustrates God's historical identification with the poor and oppressed:

> The hermeneutical principle for an exegesis of the Scriptures is the revelation of God in Christ as the Liberator of the oppressed from social oppression and to political struggle, wherein the poor recognize that their fight against poverty and injustice is not only consistent with the gospel but is the gospel of Jesus Christ (pp. 81-82).

Anticipating the argument that he imposes a hermeneutical principle upon scripture, Cone contends that this principle is central to any Christian theology. What else can the God of the Exodus and Jesus mean?

Cone adheres to the contention by the sociologists of knowledge, and before them Feuerbach and Marx, that historical context determines our questions and the answers to them. He points to a "social a priori" which is inevitably influential upon thought. White American theology, for example, informed by Enlightenment philosophy, tends to abstract theology from history, and it ignores the role of Jesus Christ in the history of the black struggle. White theology functions as a "mental grid" that only raises questions which will not challenge the reality of oppression.

From his understanding of scripture, Cone concludes that there must be a dialectic between history and scripture. The job of the theologian is to identify the word of God within history and speak prophetically to it. Because Cone knows that those who determine definitions control reality, he wants to prevent white theologians from posing the questions for black people. It is imperative for black people to tell their story and not be limited to the type of philosophical inquiry pursued by white theology. Such story telling is essential for the proclamation of the gospel and for the liberation of the oppressed because it roots black theology in the historical struggle for liberation; God is not extracted from history but present in the midst of struggle.

Black people are not limited by white

[1]*New York: Seabury Press, 1975. viii and 280 pages. Paper. $5.95.*

society's definitions, but are precisely, in their plight, chosen people. This experience turns out to be theological, even eschatological, because Jesus Christ is the present and transcendent reality of their struggle. Scripture, in dialectical relation with history, corroborates and informs the black story by telling of Christ's liberating identification with oppressed people. The interplay between "who Jesus was" and "who he is" authenticates both scripture and the black story.

Through this dialectic of history and scripture, Cone is able to defend against the charge that he, too, like white society, has permitted an ideology, in his case revolutionary ideology, to define his theology. Cone admits that oppressed people are not infallible, but maintains that God's presence with the oppressed presents evidence that they have been elected. In their story itself the Christian dimension of existence is presented for others to accept or reject, much like the gospel itself. The truth of the oppressed's proclamation that Christ is their liberator "checks" ideological thinking.

Cone perceives the black story as Christ's story, indeed Christ himself as black. The black story prevents hope from becoming etherealized; hope prevents political action from becoming ideology. If the dialectic breaks down, both poles are lost. The struggle for liberation occurs in history but is not solely bound to history. Cone labors to root the struggle within history while refusing to grant history final authority. That is God's alone.

Liberation is grounded in one's relation to God, but no one can have a full relationship if that person is fettered and rendered sub-human. Relationship to God, therefore, is part of a historico-political reality in which the "imago dei" is reflected in the struggle against opposition. Cone contends: "Freedom is the opposite of oppression, but only the oppressed are free." A corollary to this is his assertion that oppressors are themselves to be freed by the very ones whom they oppress.

An ethics of liberation must originate in the oppressed community's struggle against the status quo. White ethics is inadequate because the thought of white ethicists is conformed to their social context, which is primarily motivated by the concern to maintain that which is. To Cone this misrepresents or ignores Jesus' cross and resurrection and his identification with the outcast.

Here the author breaks new ground. Though the oppressed community is fallible, Cone trusts that its word is from God to challenge concretely the status quo as it is upheld by white theology and black apologists for white theology. This means using Christ not as a historical guideline but a present help in time of struggle.

Ultimately, "reconciliation means death," but Christ's death on the cross and his identification with those who are defined as dead by the dominant group in society have freed people from bondage to all forms of death. People are thereby reconciled to God (justification) *and* to the neighbor, that is, to the needs of the oppressed (sanctification).

Cone's message to white society: Die to your oppressive culture by identifying in concrete terms with the oppressed community. To the black community he says: Let us be reconciled to each other as we are called by Christ in our midst.

Cone voices a prophetic critique of "white" (Western) theology. The Western tradition stands accused for domesticating Christ and for removing him from history. What makes Cone's argument so powerful is that he not only argues for Christ's presence in history, then and now, but he actually points to

this presence through the telling of the black story which is Christ's story. This calls Western theology back to the cross of Christ and establishes firm ground for dialogue with the Marxist critique of religion.

Cone opposes a religion functioning basically as a sanction for the status quo. He knows that a radical Christology, one centered in the cross in history, has eschatological, that is, transformational reality in the present. He is most insightful in perceiving in history (in his case, black history) that Christ's presence concretely challenges the old existence and creates the new; he has experienced the presence of the Kingdom among those whom the crucified one has chosen.

Related to this position is Cone's most profound insight: "Freedom is the opposite of oppression, but only the oppressed are free." This is analogous to Luther's great insight, *"simul iustus et peccator,"* and related to Luther's understanding of two realms, spiritual and political.

Unfortunately Cone does not fully realize what he has here. If he did, he would have permitted the statement, "Freedom is the opposite of oppression, but only the oppressed are free," to stand as his hermeneutical principle, rather than doctoring it up with conditions which tend to erase the tension between the two realms and collapse the two into one, a secular one.

Cone does know full well that revolutionary ideology dare not replace the cross of Christ. Although he constantly asserts that he is not making that mistake, he has subtly weakened the tension so that a political identification can begin to be substituted for the necessity of Christ. If he persists in this direction, he may be forced to choose Marx over Jesus.

Politically Cone is right; one must begin by identifying fundamentally with the oppressed. Theologically this is not the case; it is necessary to identify with the sinner. Doing so will bring about the identification of the oppressor with the outcast, the poor, the lost, the wretched and the oppressed. The oppressor can see his own reflection in the face of the oppressed and can recognize that the death, with which he attempts to encapsulate the oppressed, is his own. Being confronted with sin, oppressors come to know that the wretched of the earth are indeed one with themselves and to recognize that their oppression of others is a form of denial of their own death, and worse, a denial of Christ who has become one with sinners.

Paul G. Bretscher. *The Sword of the Spirit.*[2]

Theodore Jungkuntz

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Pastor Bretscher has provided us with an illuminating essay on the "Word of God," but for all the "dots of light" contained therein (PGB, pp. 5b-6a),[1] I am bothered by a patch or two of what appears to me to be continuing darkness. The impression is given that the "sword of the Spirit" is reducible to "the

[2]*St. Louis: Evangelical Lutherans in Mission, 1979. 27 pages. Paper. $2.00..*

Gospel of God," the sword "by which the Spirit kills our old flesh and raises us up to life in Christ" (PGB, 7a). The implicit suggestion is that what in Lutheran theology has otherwise been known as "law" really belongs to the "spirit of the sword" and must be put far behind us. As Christians we have been given a new sword, the "sword of the Spirit," and it is the single-edged Gospel of Christ.

The Word of God — What Does It Include?

But I am left with a question. Does the "sword of the Spirit," the "Word of God," have a "double edge" (Ephesians 6:17; Isaiah 49:2; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 1:16)? Pastor Bretscher (he is my pastor) has not left me with clarity regarding this question. He assures me that "when [the Biblical writers] define the Word of God as Gospel, [they] are assuming and including everything we by our Lutheran heritage would speak of as the 'Law' " (PGB, p. 12b), but when he goes on to define the "Word of God," we are given a clear picture of the Gospel and only the haziest picture of the Law. One cannot learn from Pastor Bretscher's essay much about the content of the Law (it does function as accuser).

This leads me to wonder whether the essay itself has not been trapped into giving us an inadequate answer to the question regarding the nature of the "Word of God," since it has already anticipated its answer by qualifying the question. When Pastor Bretscher asks, "What is this 'sword of the Spirit,' — this 'Word of God' " (PGB, p. 4a), he gives us but two clear alternatives, namely, Christ and his Gospel on the one hand and an inspired, inerrant Bible on the other. But perhaps the suggestion of having to choose one of these alternatives has already imposed an unbiblical and unconfessional limit on the answer one must give. For instance, how does one deal adequately with the concept "Word of God" as it is used in Matthew 15:1-9 (cf. Mark 7:1-13), if one has only Pastor Bretscher's two alternatives from which to choose? Is "Word of God" Christ and his Gospel or is it an inspired, inerrant Bible? In this instance it is clearly not Christ and his Gospel (in some narrow sense) nor is it an inspired, inerrant Bible (in some broad, canonical sense). It is simply "the commandment of God" ("Honor your father and your mother") as this is opposed to "the tradition of men" ("If any one tells his father or mother, What you would have gained from me is given to God, he need not honor his father").

Pastor Bretscher then alerts us to the fact that Luther likes to employ the expression "Word of God" in the sense of Gospel (PGB, p. 14b), but he has not simultaneously reminded us that Luther uses the same expression also to mean "commandment" (in the sense of God's will regarding general ethical conduct) and "ordinance" (in the sense of God's will regarding specifically New Covenant "signs"). For instance, in his Large Catechism Luther uses the expression "the pure Word of God" to refer to the commandment "You shall honor your father and mother" as opposed to the "self-devised works" proposed by Carthusian piety and the devil.[2] Likewise Melanchthon in his Apology to the Augsburg Confession does not hesitate to equate the "Word of God" with

[1] All future references to Bretscher's *The Sword of the Spirit* will be designated within the text simply by the initials PGB with page number and column letter.

[2] *The Book of Concord,* Tappert Edition, p. 382, 121. There are at least ten other such examples in the Large Catechism found especially in the section dealing with the Ten Commandments.

"Scripture," particularly when arguing against reasons being given for the invocation of the saints.[3]

A further point of which we should remain mindful is that both Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions sometimes use the word "Gospel" in a sense that is different than simply to refer to Christ and his good news of forgiveness. It can be used to refer to an entire composition such as that ascribed to Mark, or to the entire ministry of Jesus (Mark 1:1), which included more than merely the effective proclamation of God's forgiveness (Mark 2:5), but authoritative teaching as well (Mark 7:1-23). Likewise Luther's Large Catechism employs the word Gospel not only in the sense of god's gracious forgiveness but also in the sense of Scripture as book and in reference to ethical conduct.[4]

The need for keeping open the conversation regarding the meaning of the expression "Word of God" is illlustrated also by the following discovery I made while recently teaching a course in Luther's Catechisms. In Bente's *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* I discovered the following sentence:

> . . . this is done for the sake of the unlearned and the young people, who should and must be exercised daily and brought up *in the Scriptures, the Word of God,* that they may become accustomed to the Scripture, skilled, fluent, and at home with it . . .[5] (Emphasis mine)

The sentence is in fact one written by Luther in his *Deutsche Messe* (1526) and quoted here in translation by Bente. The reader will be struck, as I was, by what appears to be in Luther a simple identification of Scripture as the Word of God. However, so unusual did such a forthright apposition in Luther's writings appear to me that I looked up the same reference in my American Edition of Luther's Works from which the following translation is taken:

> They are essential especially for the immature and the young who must be trained and educated *in the Scripture and God's Word* daily so that they may become familiar with the Bible, grounded, well versed, and skilled in it . . .[6] (Emphasis mine)

By now my curiosity was completely aroused and I wondered which of the two translators (F. Bente or Ulrich S. Leupold) had fallen into theological interpretation rather than sticking to the translation of Luther's text. Since I have in my personal library a copy of Heinrich Fausel's *D. Martin Luther,* which traces the Reformer's development through quotations from his own writings as reproduced in the definitive "Weimar Ausgabe" of his works, I eagerly turned to my Fausel to see whether I could locate the exact German of the quotation given in the two differing translations reproduced above. This is what I found:

> *Vor allem aber geschieht es um der einfachen Leute und um des jungen Volkes willen, welches täglich* in der Schrift und Gottes Wort *geübt und erzogen werden soll und muss: Sie sollen sich an die Schrift gewöhnen und in sie schicken, bewandert und kundig werden . . .*[7] *(Emphasis mine)*

Bente's translation is a theological misinterpretation, since Luther quite carefully distinguishes Scripture and the Word of God as is shown by his insertion of an "and" rather than "commas" between them. Of course, Luther sees a close connection between the two, but it is a connection determined by *content and meaning.*

All of this demonstrates that Pastor

Bretscher has rendered us all a great service in opening up this subject afresh, but I would add that it is still too soon to close the subject. Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions use the term not only to refer to Christ and his Gospel, but also explicitly to certain commandments which are distinguished as being from God rather than from people. In other words, "Word of God" is also used to refer to God's "written law and Word, which is a certain rule and norm for achieving a godly life and behavior in accord with God's eternal and immutable will."[8]

Thus the Word of God as "the sword of the Spirit," even though it is not to be used in "the spirit of the sword," nevertheless has a "double edge." It cannot be reduced to Christ and his Gospel, but it must include God's Law as fulfilled by Christ (Matthew 5:17; Romans 8:4) in terms of its theological function of accusing the sinner and in terms of its pedagogical content which distinguishes it from merely human traditions.[9]

So where do we go from here? Pastor Bretscher has eloquently directed us to the unfalsified Word of God. My plea is that we recognize even more clearly that the unfalsified Word of God is the *double edged* sword of the Spirit. If the Word of God is not thus clearly distinguished in its function and content as Law and Gospel, we will find in our hand a sword fashioned out of "sloppy agape," and we will find ourselves living in a Church characterized by it.

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[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 229-236, esp. 7-13, 31-33.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 373, 65; 375, 81; 389, 182; 402, 276; 406, 305-306; 417, 54; 433, 96.

[5] F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921/65), 71.

[6] *Luther's Works, American Edition,* "Liturgy and Hymns," Vol. 53 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), 62.

[7] Heinrich Fausel, *D. Martin Luther* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1955), 289. The reference to the Weimar Ausgabe is WA 19, 73, 17-20. Luther does indeed connect "Schrift" and "Gottes Wort" with an "und."

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 564, 3. Note the related debate concerning the "Third Use of the Law" in William H. Lazareth's and my contributions in "Confession and Congregation," *The Cresset — Occasional Paper: III,* edited by David G. Truemper (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University Press,1978), pp. 12-15; 48-56; 57-59.

[9] It is interesting to note that no Scripture passage is quoted more frequently in the Book of Concord than Matthew 15:9, a passage which contrasts the "Word of God" with mere "human tradition."

Book Reviews

MARX AND THE BIBLE: A CRITIQUE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF OPPRESSION. By José Porfirio Miranda. Translated by John Eagleson. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1974. 368 pages. Cloth, $8.95; Paper, $4.95.

MARX AGAINST THE MARXISTS: THE CHRISTIAN HUMANISM OF KARL MARX. By José Porfirio Miranda. Translated by John Drury. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1980. 336 pages. Paper. $12.95.

José Porfirio Miranda is probably the most controversial contemporary liberation theologian. Two of his recent books exemplify the reasons for this controversiality. Both books are exegetical studies: *Marx and the Bible* deals primarily with the Hebrew and Greek scriptures; *Marx Against the Marxists* studies in some detail selected passages from the Marx-Engels *corpus*. Both books are highly critical of the prevailing scholarly interpretations of these texts.

The thesis Miranda defends in *Marx and the Bible* is that the Hebrew and Greek testaments have the same theme, namely, that God is opposed to injustice and that the time will come when interhuman justice will be completely realized on earth. To support his thesis, Miranda cites numerous passages from the prophetic literature as well as passages from Paul, John, the Synoptics, the Yahwist, the Deuteronomist, the Priestly tradition, the Psalmist(s), and the author of the *Letter to the Hebrews*. Citing cases of synonymous parallelism between "justice" and "salvation," especially in the Hebrew scriptures, Miranda concludes that biblical salvation is nothing other than the elimination of oppressive injustice and the bringing about of justice in *human, earthly history*. In his view a proper understanding of the linguistic origins of the term "last judgment" shows that this term refers to the ". . . final liberation of the poor and oppressed, the definitive realization of justice on earth." To further buttress this argument, Miranda insists that ". . . once we affirm the resurrection *of the bodies*, even the most conservative theology needs a corporeal place to put them."

Most interesting is Miranda's treatment of Paul's seeming ambivalence concerning the role of law. He interprets Paul as follows. Those passages in which Paul upholds the law are passages concerning law as true interhuman justice. Those Pauline passages demanding freedom from the law and proclaiming salvation without the law attack the embodiment of systematic sin and injustice — the positive law of Western Civilization. In rejecting salvation via the law Paul is rejecting reformism; his message is subversive of the economic and political order represented by this law. Paul, like Jesus, is truly revolutionary. Miranda writes: "Paul wants a world without law. Exegesis which avoids this fact makes an understanding of the Pauline message impossible. Neither Kropotkin nor Bakunin nor Marx nor Engels made assertions against the law more powerful than those which Paul makes."

For Miranda the biblical message is all of one piece — subvert the present order of injustice so that the earth may be transformed and its inhabitants saved from oppression.

In *Marx Against the Marxists* Miranda analyzes hundreds of passages, predominantly from the writings of Marx and Engels, to support the following two conclusions: (1) The work of Marx and Engels represents the scientific elaboration of the Christian gospel message. (2) Both Marx and Engels viewed their work as the *conscious continuation* of the work of Jesus of Nazareth and his early group of followers. Miranda introduces numerous passages, many from Marx's allegedly nonmoral, "mature" work *Capital*, as evidence for his thesis that the moral import of Marx's thought is none other than a rejection of prevalent idolatry and an affirmation of universal siblinghood. He points out,

for example, that Marx alludes to the saying of Jesus, "One cannot love both God and Mammon." Since people love God by loving other human beings, Jesus' admonition places people above capital. The religion of capitalism does precisely the opposite.

Miranda exposes popular misconceptions by forcefully defending Marx's humanism, his anti-materialism, and the depth of his moral conscience, carefully supporting most of his claims with quotations from primary texts.

In Miranda's view, high regard for human life, emphasis on communal nurture, condemnation of injustice, and an optimistic view of what the future holds are common theses in both Marx and Christianity. His arguments for these similarities are sound. Furthermore, it may even be the case that a number of Marxian concepts were influenced by Jewish religion. (Marx's lineage contains seven consecutive rabbis and much of his writing, including *Capital*, employs biblical allusions.) Another claim, however, that Marx's scientific analysis of capitalistic production is a conscious elaboration of the Gospel message is not to my mind adequately supported by Miranda. In no text does Marx explicitly make such a statement and much of Miranda's evidence is culled from *Engels'* writings on early Christianity.

Two of Miranda's theses require more extensive treatment. With regard to the Pauline conception of salvation outlined in *Marx and the Bible* further analysis of Paul's use of "resurrection" is needed to clear up possible inconsistencies. Miranda argues that Paul, writing in the tradition of the Yahwist, rejects individualistic salvation. It would seem that a cogent interpretation of "communal resurrection" must be found in Paul's epistles in order to remain consistent with non-individualistic salvation. Miranda has not presented such an interpretation.

Secondly, Miranda's assertion that Marx should have affirmed the existence of God in order to be consistent with his own humanistic position lacks sufficient argumentation. The conclusion of the avowedly Hegelian argument that the existence of human subjects implies the existence of God is merely stated and not supported by argument. If the conclusion that Marx was inconsistent in his rejection of God is based upon this argument, an extensive analysis of the argument is needed.

Despite these criticisms, Miranda's thesis that the whole of Marx and Engel's work is motivated by a moral humanism similar in many ways to themes in Jewish and Christian scripture is correct.

Most contemporary interpreters of Marx exasperate Miranda. His criticisms are spicy and at times caustic. He has nothing but disdain for those who, like Louis Althusser, contend that there were two Marxes — an early "immature" Marx preoccupied with moral categories, and a later "mature" Marx who leaves behind moral trappings and concentrates on a nonmoral economic analysis of capitalism. Miranda calls this kind of "scholarship" hogwash. He doubts that such critics have read much of Marx's writings. Surely, claims Miranda, one who reads the whole of Marx's work at all carefully must conclude that the moral tone of Marx's humanism is present throughout his life and work. Anyone who thinks otherwise is reading Groucho or one of the other brothers — not Karl Marx.

Christopher Breije
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MARXISM: AN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE. By Arthur F. McGovern. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1980, 339 pages. Paper. $12.95.

Dialogues between Marxists and Christians are often plagued by misunderstandings. A major cause of these misunderstandings is the lack of common conceptions of Marxism and Christianity. Father McGovern's book, designed primarily for the Christian

reader, serves a valuable clarifying purpose insofar as it offers a starting point for a careful analysis of Marxism in its past and present manifestations.

A sizeable portion of the book traces several important themes as they surface throughout the corpus of Marxist literature. These themes include atheism, materialism, property, violence, class struggle, and democracy. McGovern, who begins with Marx' own writing, illustrates some of the significant changes which these themes underwent in the writings of both (1) those thinkers who molded traditional Marxism, and (2) those thinkers often labeled "Critical Marxists." The first group is comprised of Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. The second group includes Lukacs, Gramsci, Marcusse, Habermas, Althusser, Bloch, and Garaudy. In regard to the crucial concept of atheism, McGovern concludes that while atheism is an integral part of classical Marxism, it is not a necessary tenet of Critical Marxism.

An important chapter "The Church: From Anathemas to Christian Marxists" documents changes in Christian attitudes toward socialism and Marxism. Examining papal social encyclicals from 1864 to the present, McGovern shows how these writings have preserved historical continuity, yet have allowed for increasing creativity, especially in regard to the issue of private property.

A chapter on liberation theology in Latin America begins with a discussion of the impact of Paulo Freire's pedagogical method. The centrality of praxis in the lives of these theologians provides a clue for grasping the application of Marxian principles to their theology. A case study of the interaction between the Chilean government under Allende and Christians for Socialism provides a peek at the possibilities and problems confronting socialist Christians.

The book is a balanced treatment which clarifies alternatives more than it proposes policies. Of special value is the care McGovern takes in his evaluation: Although his Marxian analysis of monopolistic capitalism presents serious criticisms, he is equally aware of (1) the poor track-record of those countries who claim to be communistic, and (2) the we'll-work-it-out-when-we-get-there naivete of political idealists who demand the immediate crushing of capitalism, but have no tested, clear-headed plan to fill the resultant void. Although he is sympathetic to liberation theology, McGovern criticizes José Miranda's one-sided Biblical exegesis and Juan Segundo's peremptory embrace of socialism as *the* Christian alternative.

Without recourse to harsh polemic, McGovern points to the need for creative political options which are self-critical. Regarding United States politics and economics, McGovern argues for imaginative reformism rather than revolutionary tactics. We must look for political forms which are "both idealistic and realistic" — forms which reduce exploitation and insure democratic control, yet avoid utopianism.

Extensive notes following each chapter offer excellent bibliographical leads. The text often includes critical summaries of the works cited. Perhaps the book's only weakness is the scant treatment of Protestant social and political thought. Although McGovern does include a section on Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, it is very short.

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TOWARD AN AFRICAN THEOLOGY. By John S. Pobee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979. 171 pages. Paper. $5.95.

Usually, arguments for national or ethnic theologies make me nervous. They attack classical theology as essentially Europeo-American and suggest that their new theology either opens up doors for everyone or puts the rest of the world on notice that Africa (or Asia, or Latin America, etc.) will do its own theological thing. The oneness of God's church might well tremble.

John Pobee is not usual, because he puts his finger on the issue — mission. Even his bitter criticism of the past has to do with the church's mission and its frequent failure. When he probes for solutions, his question is not: How do you adapt the Christian truth to the African genius?, but rather: How do you permit Jesus Christ to speak in the African idiom of proverbs and picture language? Also: As you do this, how can you find the proverbs of African socio-religious language to which you can give the response of Christ as Lord? And even, more specifically: How can you dig into African proverbial resources to undergird a shift from exploitative polygamy to committed monogamy? His treatment shows Pobee as a concerned African Christian who refuses to be either a legalist or ethical putty.

In the early chapters, Pobee pays his dues to competent traditional theology. When he becomes "African" he dares to affirm much in native religions. Yet he never leaves you in doubt as to his responsible commitment to the Lord of the Church.

Let no American reader be put off by the word "African." Repeatedly, after delighted reading of African proverbs, one says: I wish I had said that — in fact, I probably will in next week's sermon, class or conversation.

John Pobee is an Anglican lay theologian, professor of New Testament and church history at the University of Ghana at Legon.

Herbert M. Zorn
Portland, Oregon

A MUSE FOR THE MASSES. RITUAL AND MUSIC IN AN AGE OF DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION 1770-1870. By Conrad L. Donakowski. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977. xii and 435 pages. Cloth. $22.00.

Too few books are written about the nineteenth century and too few books are written about the history of the faith among common Christian people. Yet, it is the history of Christian culture which may prove to be more useful in the long run than accounts of church politics or dogma.

Turning the tide, here is a book which is avowedly and beneficially dependent on the structural analysis technique of Levi Strauss in its review of nineteenth-century religious life, and which, therefore, provides one with a thorough grasp of Romanticism, church life, culture, and above all a sense of the forces which brought Western people to the present moment.

The structure which recurs throughout the period, claims Donakowski, is the musical metaphor, the appearance of which in the late eighteenth century both signaled the end of the (very visual) *l'esprit geometrique* and finished relocating reality from heaven to earth. What's appealing — and to the point — is the elevation of music as the key to understanding Romanticism as well as nineteenth-century religion, a method sure to produce equally rewarding results for the current century.

Donakowski orchestrates his *cantus firmus* by showing how during the French Revolution the artist was propagandist, music was decoration, the expression of mass feeling, and how religious rites were mass media (God in man's new image). In a second section the artist is portrayed as hero, with music as the major tool of communication. Traditional religion turns out as counter-culture, the social significance of the plain chant revival is made clear, and the religious significance of Utopianism, communalism, and populism is interpreted musically. In a final section Donakowski explores formulas, or those attempts to legislate aesthetic standards. As a human "formula" for Romanticism in the flesh, he rehearses the history of John Henry Newman. Profuse notes, a lengthy bibliography, and useful index complete the book.

Of special note is the author's careful attention to musical-liturigical aspects of the French Revolution. The revolutionary civic cult, complete with mammoth choirs of up to three thousand voices, congregational participation, and rich ritual was grist for a

monumental musical style which "exalted man and his city." Precursors were the often-neglected Gossec and Lesueur, the notable prophets being Beethoven and Berlioz, for they all strove to "make the sublime popular and the popular sublime."

Interesting too is Donakowski's point that German pietism was a clear manifestation of the Enlightenment, not, as the pietists themselves frequently claimed, a reaction to it. The interrelationship of Klopstock, Herder, and Goethe make that conclusion inescapable, he says.

A final example of Donakowski's perceptive abilities is his emphasis on populism as a major force in Romanticism, traces of which are discernible today in mass choral societies, music education for the masses, and obeisance to dilletantism (church music has not been immune!).

Romanticism's legacy to the twentieth century is threefold according to Donakowski: first, as a torch in the cave, continuing the exploratory enterprise begun by modern paganism; second, as the translator into modern terms of the heritage of the millennium-and-a-half between the fall of Rome and the rise of Romanticism; finally, as the raiser of two basic questions facing the individual and society: how to foster reintegration of the human person and how to build a sense of community.

As a reviewer, I would have benefitted by a fuller treatment of some of the nineteenth-century's popular musical movements, known in the trade as *kitsch*, or by more detailed accounts of church music throughout the period.

Mark Bangert
Christ Seminary — Seminex

A HISTORY OF EVANGELISTIC HYMNODY. By James E. Sallee. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978. 104 pages. Cloth. $6.95.

James Sallee was head of the music department of Hyles-Anderson College, Hammond, Indiana when an automobile accident caused his death in October of 1975. This book is a tribute to his work and influence at the college as well as a partial record, one suspects, of this master's work in music at the University of Colorado.

It brings together under one cover the standard information on the Gospel Hymn, its predecessors, and a contextual appreciation for the Gospel Hymn (which is really what the book is about). Helpful in this respect is an appendix of eighteen examples of such hymns and sundry attempts at defining the Gospel Hymn.

For the serious student of hymnology, the book should be read together with Sallee's own resources, plus Heilbut's *The Gospel Sound,* Lovell's *Black Song,* and Reynold's recently revised text, *A Joyful Sound.*

Mark Bangert
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ANGER AND ASSERTIVENESS IN PASTORAL CARE. By David W. Augsburger. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979. x and 86 pages. Paper. $2.95.

Most people tend to handle their angry feelings in one of two ways. They either bottle up their feelings and insert an emotional cork, or they lash out at other people and let the chips fall where they may. In the first instance, blood pressures rise and stomachs churn; in the second case, people may be hurt and relationships broken. There must be a better way to deal with anger.

Augsburger's better way for handling anger and aggression constructively is through assertiveness. Assertive behavior expresses the feelings of the angry person in a positive way while recognizing the inherent worth of the offending party. The goal of assertive behavior is to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution in conflict situations. The assertive strategy correctly affirms that feelings — including anger — are neither good nor bad. Morality enters the picture only as behaviors are chosen to express those feelings. That is where assertiveness can make a difference.

Theologically, Augsburger draws on Paul Tillich's idea that loveless power violates, powerless love abdicates, but power and love in balance create both justice and community. This little book is aimed primarily at pastors who need to manage anger and conflict in a congregational setting. It should prove to be a valuable asset to all those who seek a middle ground between flight and fight.

Norman P. Dake
Lutheran Mission Association
St. Louis County Hospital
and County Jail

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE YOUTH MINISTRY. By Glenn E. Ludwig. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979. 125 pages. Paper. $4.95.

There have been a number of helpful resources published in the area of

youth ministry in recent years. Glenn Ludwig, a Lutheran pastor from Hanover, Pennsylvania, has condensed some of the best and combined them with his own experience and creativity. The result is an interesting and insightful addition to Abingdon's "Creative Leadership Series."

Using the analogy of building a house, Ludwig begins with a theological and theoretical frame of reference for ministry with youth. The foundation he sets up is a solid one: youth are part of the church, people of God who have a message to proclaim and a mission to fulfill. Thus youth ministry is a part of the total ministry of the church. It is ministry "by, for, and with" young people.

Ludwig takes pains to describe some of the unique characteristics and challenges which contribute to the make-up of adolescents in our culture and congregations. Drawing on such insightful writers as Merton Strommen, he provides some excellent background information on "who young people are" as we move into the 80's. He then goes on to deal with issues such as programming, structure, selection and training of advisors, retreats, and resources.

Throughout, Ludwig provides the reader with some nuggets in the form of insights, ideas, and comparisons. The "numbers game" is a loser, he says, because it focuses on the number of people at any given meeting or event rather than on ministry for, with, and by those who come. Likewise, Ludwig contrasts *effectiveness,* which focuses on organizing for a desired outcome with *efficiency* which means producing a definite result. In the final analysis "youth ministry does not just happen. It takes a lot of hard work, a touch of creativity, and a large measure of openness." The effort, says Ludwig, may be as important as the result.

John Rosenberg
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Olympia, Washington

GUILT: CURSE OR BLESSING? By Arthur H. Becker. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977. 144 pages. Cloth. $7.95.

The title of this work adequately sums up the author's basic thesis that guilt can be a blessing if we know how to recognize its signals and use it constructively to deal with ourselves, others, and God.

The author is well qualified for a book on this subject. He draws on his long experience as parish pastor, hospital chaplain, professor of pastoral care, and supervisor of clinical pastoral education to offer deep insights into human behavior by means of specific examples and case material.

Though written in clear, nontechnical language, the book is by no means easy-going. Becker looks at both the theological and the psychological aspects of guilt, discusses the purposes of the law as it relates to guilt; deals with law/gospel polarities, and stresses the importance of creative confession and the sacraments in dealing properly with guilt. Because of the weighty subject matter, persons would be advised to use this book in a group setting, or under leadership. It is excellent for those interested in developing their listening/caring skills for ministry. Pastors, counselors, and chaplains will find it a very practical addition to their counseling library.

David G. Mennicke
Living Christ Lutheran Church
Dundee, Illinois

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In **Theology of a Classless Society** (Orbis, $8.95), Indian theologian Geevarghese Mar Osthathios proposes a new classless, equal, and non-property holding world, finding a rationale and analogy in the co-equality of the Holy Trinity and the nuclear family. In Acts 2:44-48 he finds scriptural basis for refraining from inter-communion until there is an economic order and sharing of all the resources of the rich with the poor. Along the way he argues that his proposal is not communist and that it is no more or less utopian than the command to be perfect as the heavenly father is perfect.

Do you want to do something about world hunger? Jack A. Nelson's **Hunger for Justice: the Politics of Food and Faith** (Orbis, $4.95) is no band-aid approach. He claims that concern for hungry people necessarily leads to a concern about the role of American military policy, that the world food crisis cannot be resolved without a fundamental shift in values, economic priorities, and the distribution of decision-making power, and that Christians, in their attempts to depoliticize the faith, have placed it in the service of an economic system that victimizes the poor. Hunger is a consequence of social injustice; it will be overcome to the degree that justice is built into the religious and social fabric of nations.

Abraham P. Bloch wrote **The Biblical and Historical Background of Jewish Customs and Ceremonies** (KTAV, $17.50) in order to identify the date of origin of various religious customs, to follow their development through the centuries, and to outline the socio-religious conditions which provide the rationale for the various rituals. Here is explained in non-technical fashion the ceremonies of Bar and Bat Mitzvah, of marriage, divorce and mourning, of synagogue worship and a kosher home. What do our Jewish neighbors do on Sabbath, at the New Year festival, the Day of Atonement, the feasts of tabernacles and Passover, and at Hannukah and Purim? Find out here. A public library ought to own this book, and a responsible church library should not be without it or one of its several authoritative competitors.

What Are They Saying about Luke and Acts? (Paulist, $2.95) In this popularly written, 128-page introduction to the Lukan materials, Robert J. Karras disseminates the views of Paul Minear, Nils Dahl, Luke Johnson, and Frederick Danker (for whom Luke's theme is: "God, the Great Benefactor, reaches out to his world at the time appointed through his rejected Servant-Benefactor Jesus and through his Benefactor-Servant-Community, Israel-the-Church"). Luke preached of a God who remained faithful to his people in times of crises and who could be reached and touched by prayer. "Luke celebrates life, community, and the goodness and fidelity of God, and he invites endless curtain calls for Jesus, the person of hope." Order this as background material for understanding the Series C Gospel Lessons.

Daniel Durken's **Marching Thru Exodus** (The Liturgical Press, $39.95) is a series of six cassette tapes which take the hearer on a slow-moving exegetical tour of the book of Exodus. The approach is non-technical and is informed by the usual methods of Pentateuchal study (JEDP, form criticism, comparison of the covenant with the Hittite treaties). It's the sort of thing you can listen to on your car cassette deck, though the fifth tape, which is supposed to accompany a slide lecture (slides not included) may make you feel like an outsider. A final lecture discusses allusions to the Exodus in the New Testament.

The Bible in Its Literary Milieu: Contemporary Essays, edited by John Maier and Vincent Tollers (Eerdmans, $10.95), is an anthology of essays by twenty-five scholars, selected to show the rich variety and promise of literary studies. These "readable representations of various critical approaches to biblical problems which have recently influenced scholars" include also an essay by the editor of *Currents*: "Aspects of Intertestamental Messianism."

One way to sum up J.W. Rogerson's **Anthropology and the Old Testament** (John Knox, $10.00) would be to de-

scribe it as a negative evaluation of a naive or mistaken use of social anthropology by Old Testament scholars. He shows the three stages through which anthropology has passed, leading up to modern times where fieldwork and functionalism dominate. Do primitive traits in a society represent survivals from an earlier stage of development (this assumption lies behind Alt's discussion of the "god of the fathers")? Or do such traits sometimes result from contact with another culture or even by degeneration of developed civilizations? If they sometimes come from degeneration, comparison of "primitive" traits in modern bedouin and ancient Israelites may be largely irrelevant. Unclear anthropological understandings of what is meant by "tribe" led to the comparison of Israelite tribes and Greek tribes and the widely-discussed amphictyonic hypothesis. The word tribe in each society may have had a far different meaning. Though primarily negative in his conclusions, the author lays down important methodological principles that will greatly help all subsequent scholars.

Listen to what Henri Nouwen has to say about Kenneth Leech, **Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality** (Harper, $8.95): "Kenneth Leech not only makes us aware that our personal relationship with God is as much, if not more, in need of formation as our relationships with people; he also makes us aware that only with solid spiritual formation can ministry be practiced in a responsible way." The title suggests a real intimacy between the spiritual director and the Christian; it reclaims the centrality of spiritual direction in ministry.

New Music Composition by David Cope (Schirmer Books/Macmillan, $8.95) is designed to cover the basic areas of composition of our century and places a strong emphasis on the newer musics of the past forty years. Structured as a college text, the book takes the reader through the techniques, processes, instruments and procedures of new music composition.

Herbert Bouman, emeritus professor of Systematic Theology at Christ Seminary — Seminex, has written a popular study of the current denominational scene: **A Look at Today's Churches — A Comparative Guide** (Concordia, $2.95). Words like "honest," "fair," and "evangelical" reflect the character of the author and of this, his most recent book. He calls Lutherans to be in the forefront of genuine ecumenical endeavor: "In their Confessions, the documents that set forth what Lutherans believe, teach, and confess, they are at pains to assert their true catholicity, and they vigorously repudiate sectarianism of all kinds." A study guide and bibliography make this a useful tool for adult education classes. Strangely, however, the mammoth study of Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *Profiles in Belief*, a seven-volume introduction to the beliefs of American Christians, is unmentioned in the bibliography.

Jay E. Adams has become the guru on counselling for right wing Protestant circles. Two recent Baker publications, **Update on Christian Counselling, Volume One**, and **More than Redemption: A Theology of Christian Counselling** ($2.75 and $9.95 respectively) spell out the presuppositions and goals of his "biblical counselling." For him the authority of the Bible flows from its inerrancy, and his 25 presuppositions for biblical counselling really have nothing to do with the person and work of Christ. Presupposition 25 is about as close as he gets: "The Scriptures set forth the principles for human living that were demonstrated in the life of Christ." The approach seems rigid, unevangelical and legalistic. Evangelism for him is to put a burr under the saddle (his word for it), and to tell the unbelieving counselee, who plans not to come back, "The way of the transgressor is hard." Adams promises many more books on the subject. It should be an easy wait.

Ralph W. Klein

"Should I publish in *Currents*?"

The December issue of *Currents* will again continue a series of longer and shorter pieces to enhance the observance of Advent and Christmas. We are looking for: original hymns or poems; brief descriptions of liturgical or devotional ideas; short essays on unusual aspects of Advent and Christmas. For each Advent/Christmas hymn, poem, or "idea" published in the December issue, we will extend your subscription one year!

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